Chronicles

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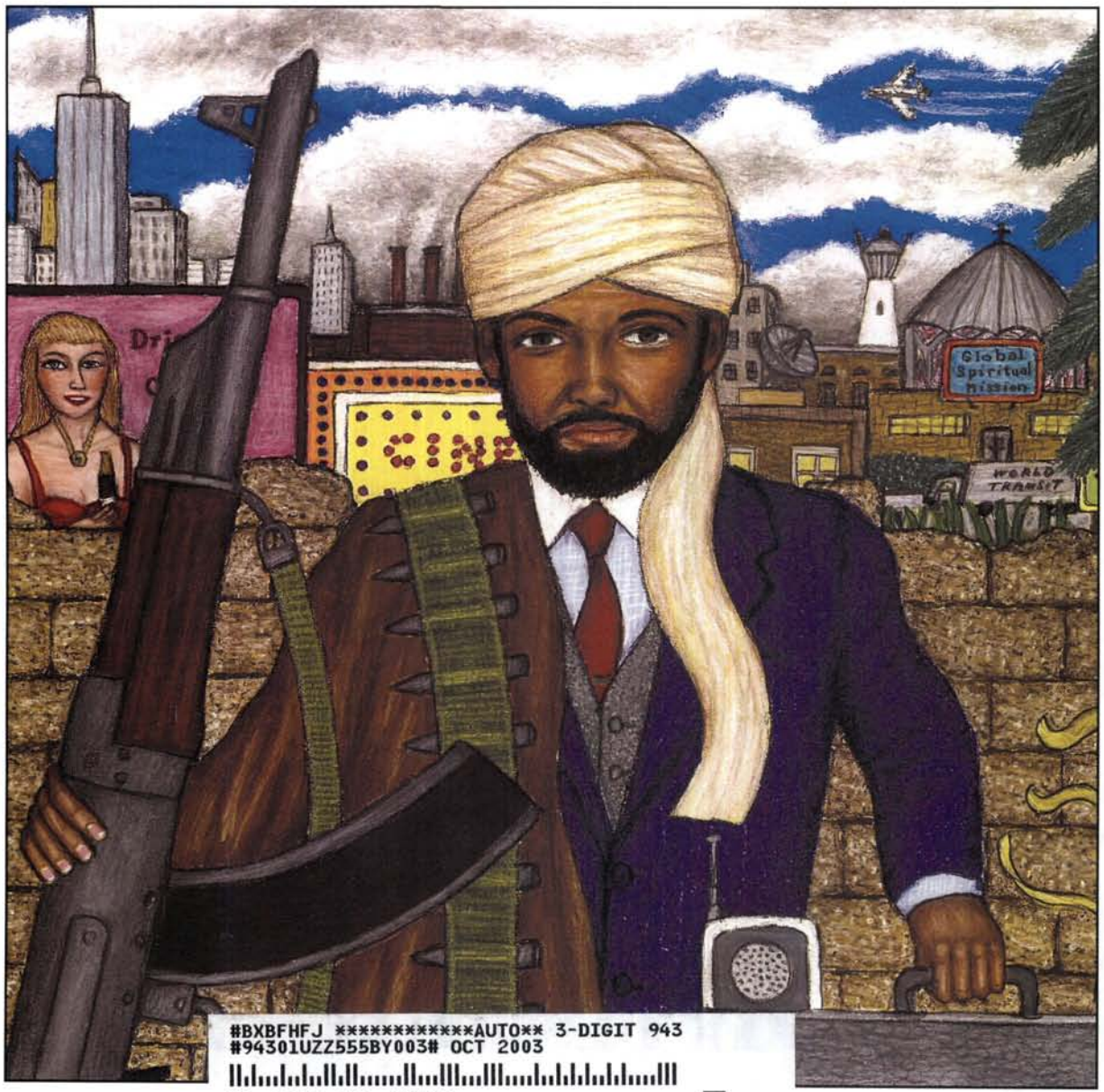

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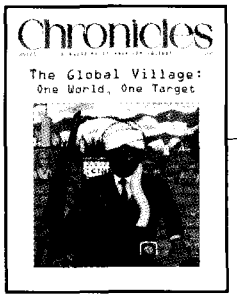

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Man's Dominion

In "'Bless the Lord, All You Works of the Lord': Nature and the Incarnation" (Views, December 2001), Scott P. Richert asserts that "modern environmentalist thought" seeks to preserve a closed, idyllic system through the exclusion of man. This is either disingenuous or uninformed; either way, it is a wholly inaccurate characterization of modern environmentalism. While the Wilderness Society and others lobby to preserve isolated pockets of primordial nature in a sea of urbanization, no serious environmentalist would agree with Mr. Richert that "paradise, it seems, is no place for man." Quite the opposite: It has become apparent over the years that only those places that are well known and well loved are likely to be preserved. In fact, arguably the most tragic event in American conservation history, the damming of Glen Canyon, occurred precisely because the canyon was unknown to all but a small group of prospectors, cattlemen, and river rats. Any exclusionary tendencies on the part of the conservation community have been pragmatic compromises. The problem is not humans *per se*, but the eight billion of us currently sharing this finite sphere (many of whom feel compelled to drive their four-wheelers over a good part of it).

While I agree with Mr. Richert that Christians are uniquely positioned to be responsible stewards of creation, I believe that they have fallen tragically short in this regard. Why does it seem that every proposal to rape and desecrate our natural heritage comes cloaked in the pious exhortation of "man's dominion over Nature"? For once, I would like to see the same rationale used to advocate the preservation of some small part of this suffering world.

—*Nicholas D. Radovich*
Denver, CO

Mr. Richert Replies:

Mr. Radovich has, unfortunately, misread both my article and my intent. I was not criticizing conservationist organizations, which try to preserve nature for the benefit of man, but mainstream environmentalist *thought*, which, *contra* Mr. Radovich, has become increasingly antihuman. I agree that "only those places that are well known and well loved are likely to be preserved"; indeed, I have argued that very point at least twice in *Chronicles* in the past year (see "For Keeps! A Christian Defense of Property," *Views*, April 2001, and "Not in Your Back Yard," *Letter From Rockford*, May 2001). I also agree that Christians "have fallen tragically short" in their duty to be "responsible stewards of creation"; that failure, in fact, is one of the concerns that prompted the very article that Mr. Radovich is criticizing. I cannot agree, however, that "the problem is . . . the eight billion of us currently sharing this finite sphere," and not simply because Mr. Radovich overstates the population of the Earth by about a third. The ground-breaking research of such thinkers as Virginia Abernethy should have taught us by now that the problem is not population *per se*, but the cultural, political, and economic conditions that help determine the carrying capacity of a region. Indeed, these conditions—the product of human choices—may affect carrying capacity even more than natural conditions, since they often override man's recognition of natural limitations, encouraging excessive optimism in reproduction.

On Christmas

I am very sympathetic toward the central point and direction of Aaron D. Wolf's "A Tender, Unitarian Christmas" (*Views*, December 2001), but I must register one significant complaint. If we were trying to decide which historical group has been modernity's favorite whipping boy, the Puritans would have to be in the front rank of contestants. This alone should give *Chronicles* readers pause.

As a Puritan myself, and a thoroughgoing incarnationalist, and as one who has both read extensively in Puritan writings and written on them, I feel the need to take time away from my Christmas preparations to protest. To cite just one counter-example on the supposed Puritan antipathy to an incarnational Christ-

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mas, the Puritan poetess Anne Bradstreet once wrote, in passing, about Christmas: "Through Christendom with great festivity / Now's held (but guessed) for blest Nativity."

There was a Puritan hostility to the common celebration of Christmas of that time. The later Unitarian celebrations of Christmas were heretical, but at least they were decent. Many of the earlier customs were "orthodox" but indecent, which provoked an honest reaction. An important part of the Puritan problem with Christmas was the drunken way in which it was commonly celebrated. This, by itself, does not represent a problem with the Incarnation, but rather the reverse. I would not like it much if someone questioned my commitment to the Resurrection of Christ because I objected to the carousing of Mardi Gras before Lent, which is before Easter, which celebrates the Resurrection.

—Douglas Wilson
Moscow, ID

It is no surprise to see negative views of evangelical Protestants in the "mainstream" press, but it is sad to see such views displayed in *Chronicles*.

In "A Tender, Unitarian Christmas," Aaron D. Wolf tells us that "modern religious observers often note that evangelicalism is virtually the same as liberalism, just 50 years behind"—ergo, evangelical Protestants are on their way to damnation. Mr. Wolf seems quite capable of tossing out undergraduate philosophy tidbits such as "Ramist logic" and ferreting out the religious backgrounds of numerous 19th-century composers of Christmas carols, but he seems confused about what evangelicals believe and the biblical underpinnings of salvation. He can rest assured that the Incarnation is important to evangelicals, that the concept of Emmanuel (God with us) is prevalent, and that we know God was made flesh.

Mr. Wolf really goes off the rails when he mocks the Holy Ghost's role in Salvation with a snide reference to the "supernatural" and speaks about the great importance of sacraments and the "working out of salvation." Performing sacraments will not gain anyone entry into heaven, because salvation is the "gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). As far as the "working out of salvation," I will rely on the Word of God over "modern religious observers": "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). And that "sterile line 'Peace on earth, goodwill to men" looks like Luke 2:14 to me. Otherwise, keep up the good work at *Chronicles*, and try to be nice to us evangelical Protestant readers.

—Samuel J. Tinaglia
Park Ridge, IL

Mr. Wolf Replies:

Dr. Wilson, whose magazine, *Credenda Agenda*, I greatly admire, is right to say that the Puritans take a good deal of guff in the modern press. The mythical image of the curmudgeonly, teetotaling Puritans on constant witch hunts has been exploded by numerous scholars, but it remains in our popular imagination.

Nonetheless, while the Puritans professed belief in the Incarnation, their brand of Christianity was not *incarnational*, because their theology did not center on the fact of the Incarnation, as shown specifically by their rejection of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper in favor of a "spiritual presence."

If you really believe that, in the words of the Athanasian Creed, Christ's divine and human natures are united "inconfusedly, inseparably, indivisibly, and unchangeably," then it is impossible for Christ merely to be spiritually present anywhere—including at the Lord's Supper.

If you really believe that the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, then that changes your perspective—your perception of the potential redeemability of matter. That's good, since men are not ghosts but are made of flesh and blood, and it is the whole of man—not just his soul or spirit—that needs saving. Hence the words of Our Lord in John 6:54: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." This teaching was rejected by the Puritans, who favored stimulating "religious affections" rather than looking for Christ in His Sacrament.

More generally, God communicates to mankind through physical means. This is why the Church has historically rejected iconoclasm and maintained feast days centering on the ministry of the Incarnate Christ—including Christmas.

Even more generally, the Incarnation teaches Christians to look for the blessing of God in the corporeal world, in such things as plain bread and wine, as we acknowledge that God's Creation is, indeed, good and worthy of our thankful enjoyment. Conversely, those who attempt to achieve personal piety by abstaining totally from alcohol or meat or marriage are rejecting the Incarnation. That is why Chesterton said that those who convert to teetotaling are really on the path to becoming Muslims.

G.K.'s statement came to mind when I read the argument that the Puritans were hostile toward the celebration of Christmas because of the indecent, drunken habits of European peasants at Christmas time. The prospect of public drunkenness is not the reason why the Puritans rejected the rest of the historic, universal Christian feasts—Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, etc. Luther railed against the problem of drunkenness in Bavaria, but he still upheld the Christological feast days of the universal Church, especially Christmas.

If Bradstreet's poem "Winter" is an indication of the Puritans' attitude toward an incarnational Christmas, then I think my point is proved. Far from celebrating Puritan preparations for the Feast of the Nativity, Bradstreet is simply chronicling the movement of the sun through winter, musing that, when "he's housed in horned Capricorn," the folks back in Europe are busy feasting.

Regarding Mr. Tinaglia's concerns, the term "evangelical" needs some qualification. Lutherans were the first to be called "evangelical," because they held the pure Gospel of justification by faith alone—the *euangelion*—as the "doctrine on which the Church stands and falls." Evangelicalism, on the other hand, is something very different. It is a movement that supplanted the Sacrament of Baptism with the virtual sacrament of making a decision for Christ, praying the sinner's prayer, walking down the aisle, lifting the hand, etc.—a practice unheard of in the historic Church before the 18th century. I am familiar (as were my Lutheran forebears) with Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5-6. Certainly, my "good works" cannot merit for me eternal life. But the Sacraments are not my works: They are the works of God.

Is the "washing of regeneration" of which St. Paul speaks in Titus 3:5 a mere metaphor? Or could it be something more—something prefigured by Noah's

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ark, by the sons of Israel's trek through the Red Sea and the Jordan river, by the healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5:13), by the Pool of Siloam? Could it be that, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9) complements "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)?

On America's Wise Turks

Your December 2001 issue contains a number of articles attacking Unitarianism. Frankly, as a Unitarian, upon reading Aaron D. Wolf's piece decrying the unitarianization of Christmas, I was able to enjoy the holiday as seldom before. But I am astonished and offended by Thomas Fleming's line, "Better a foolish Turk . . . than a Unitarian with a Ph.D."

While most Unitarians in the United States have been linked to the left, it is noteworthy that the founder of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was John C. Calhoun. He also established the Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. Admittedly, by the onset of the Civil War, Unitarianism had become so associated with abolitionism that the religion almost disappeared in the South during the conflict. Indeed, only the Charleston and New Orleans churches survived.

While numerous reformers of the 19th century were either Unitarians or Quakers, the former religion was too individualistic to be restricted to the left. Both John and John Quincy Adams were Unitarian, as was William Howard Taft. In office, none were deemed radical Jacobins.

What makes Unitarians so contentious? Their faith in reason. Thomas Jefferson, whom Unitarians often claim, delved into the New Testament and deleted passages of miracles and other portions contradictory to human experience. What was left in "The Jefferson Bible" was the man Jesus. To some, Jefferson had indulged in arrogance and blasphemy. To Unitarians, he did the proper thing—he judged the "Holy Scriptures" by his own reason and experience.

Consider the story of Adam and Eve, the couple created for eternal life. When they indulge in curiosity and eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, God condemns them to death. To orthodox Christians, God judges man. To Unitarians, man must judge such a God—and often, we must condemn him.

To orthodox Christians, God becomes man. To many Unitarians, man strives to become God, or at least god-like. If there is a problem with Unitarians, it is our optimistic belief in the perfectibility of man. Too often, we forget that man can be perfectly devilish. To create room for man's perfectibility, Unitarians sometimes flirted with the utopian New Harmony-type communities of the 19th century and expressed a zeal for peace and world federation in the 20th. Yet, reason could also expose some of the gruesome costs of 20th-century "utopias": Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, the People' Republic of China, Castro's Cuba, etc.

In Dr. Fleming's dichotomous world, orthodox Christians (Trinitarians) fight to save Christian civilization from the onslaught of Muslims and Unitarians—one enemy without, the other within the gates. I reject that dichotomy. I view Unitarianism as the natural heir of the best of Western civilization—its core, its Greek origins. That civilization has been distorted, and sometimes smothered, by Middle-Eastern imported religions and fanaticisms, based on their "Holy Scriptures": the Bible, the Torah, and the Koran. We should strive to retain the core, shorn of the Middle Eastern accretions of two millennia. We should use our reason to judge and reject the imports. Not all Muslims are Taliban, nor are all religious people fanatics. However, we clearly reject the Taliban Muslim; and we must also reject the Taliban Christians and Jews.

It is because I strive to be rational that I am now a conservative. And for the same reason, I remain a Unitarian.

—Hugh Murray
Milwaukee, WI

Dr. Fleming Replies:

Mr. Murray is a perfect example of what has always been wrong with the conservative movement. Rather than take up the challenge to defend the possibility that Unitarians are Christian, he prefers to take refuge in categories like "rational" and "conservative" and to argue that many Unitarians have been "conservative." This is a pointless and meaningless exercise.

Strange that he should bring up the Unitarian church on Archdale Street in Charleston. As a teenaged atheist looking to meet girls, I attended that church for several years and took part in their far-left political activities. I admired some of these people and still do, particularly the "pastor" who announced one Sunday that he was resigning because, as an atheist, he would be better off going to law school. I concluded then that, even for atheists, the Unitarian Church offered nothing but Emersonian platitudes and potted Oriental philosophy.

Of course it is possible for good people, even "conservative" people, to have been Unitarians. Adams and Jefferson were both Unitarian in theology. Whether they (especially Jefferson) were Christians or not is another matter. There have been phrenologists and Scientologists who were doubtless good in their own way, and I have heard it argued that there were good men among the communists and Nazis. Most Nazis and communists were not, and even Mr. Murray concedes that "most Unitarians in the United States have been linked to the left." There is a reason for that linkage: Unitarianism is a movement aimed at destroying the traditional cultural and religious order. One hundred and fifty years ago, a sound man might be deceived, but today, who but leftists would swallow such an elixir of decrepitude without gagging?

I have no objection to people being Unitarians or Vegetarians or No-Caféterians. What I do object to is their dishonest pretense at being Christian. Like feminists and other leftists, Unitarians are not content to form their own version of Islam without tears, but they must prowl about the world under false colors seeking, if not the ruin of souls, then at least the destruction of that zest for life which characterizes real Christianity. I have read passionate pagans and met passionate Muslims, but among the Unitarians I have found nothing more impassioned than a self-righteous determination to be smarter than other people. As William Wordsworth wrote:

Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled on a creed outworn.

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ENRON, a derivatives trading firm, filed the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history on December 2, 2001. The media has framed the scandal as a simple morality play pitting good against evil, with the Texas firm's top management and the Bush administration competing for the latter role. Naturally, neoconservatives blame the Clinton administration for the entire scandal. Both ignore the larger issue: an unstable U.S. credit structure, which I discussed at length in "Economic Liberty and American Manufacturing" (*Views*, January).

At its peak, Enron's stock sold for $90.75. Today, it fetches less than *one dollar* per share. How did such a large firm, with more than 20,000 employees, disappear into bankruptcy in a matter of months? Public records and economic reasoning tell the story. Enron's 2001 annual report, filed last April with the Securities and Exchange Commission, explained its business model: Enron's operations "are principally engaged in the transportation of natural gas through pipelines to markets throughout the United States; the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity . . . ; [and] the marketing of natural gas, electricity and other commodities and related risk management and finance services worldwide." Translation: Enron used derivatives to trade financial markets, telling the SEC it used "offsetting or hedging transactions, to manage exposures to market price movements . . . "

Derivatives are described by the *Washington Post* as "complex, risky and largely unregulated financial contracts," which again ignores the larger issue: the taxpayer-backed liability concerns raised by the involvement of an agency backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government. The collapse of Long-Term Capital Management in 1998 involved leverage and large New York banks serving as counter-parties to derivative transactions. One observer remarked that the financial system nearly "froze up." In a larger crisis, a big bank with counter-party exposure would face two options: bankruptcy or bailout by the Federal Reserve under the "too big to fail" principle. Enron's top management, before it was rebuffed by the Bush administration, apparently also thought the company belonged in that category.

A derivative is a hybrid financial instrument that changes in value in concert with a related or underlying security, fixed-income instrument, currency, interest rate, or stock-market index. They are popular with small speculators who trade hybrid stocks that change in value based on an underlying index like the S&P 500. Derivatives can also hedge risk. An automotive company denominating its foreign sales in a local currency like the Mexican peso could use them to hedge against a crisis like the 1994 peso devaluation. The large Enron operation created more exotic versions regulated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, but a 1992 rule-making process initiated by the CFTC's outgoing chair, Wendy Gramm, exempted energy swap derivatives from public scrutiny (*Financial Times*, January 6). Mrs. Gramm also serves on Enron's board. The popular media focuses on large Enron campaign contributions to Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX), her husband. A plausible alternative explanation is that the Gramms, both economists, believed derivatives can insure individuals and the credit structure against risk. If so, they join LTCM's finance professors in learning a bitter lesson. Senator Gramm reported that his family lost $686,000 in deferred compensation that was set aside for his wife in an account tied to the value of Enron stock. The bankruptcy filing means that the account is worthless.

The Enron bankruptcy provides greater ironies. The Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 138 ("Accounting for Derivative Instruments and Hedging Activities") in June 2000. It is an amendment to an earlier FASB statement (No. 133), which requires all derivatives to be recorded on corporate balance sheets at fair value. One aim of this is to provide transparency for the kind of off-balance-sheet derivative activity that bankrupted Enron. Buried in a 2001 Enron SEC filing is the following statement: "The total impact of Enron's adoption of SFAS No. 133 on earnings . . . is dependent upon certain pending interpretations, which are currently under consideration . . . by the FASB. While the ultimate conclusions . . . could impact the effects of Enron's adoption of SFAS No. 133, Enron does not believe such a conclusion would have a material effect . . . " Really? An Enron Report of Unscheduled Material Event, filed with the SEC on November 8, 2001, disclosed "the financial activities of a wholly-owned subsidiary" limited partnership, key to the bankruptcy and based in the Cayman Islands, "which engaged in derivative transactions with Enron to permit Enron to hedge market risks." The failed LTCM hedge fund was also based in the Caymans.

Markets need information (transparency) to function efficiently. But even obvious warning signs have been ignored. Orange County, California, declared bankruptcy in 1994, after its treasurer bet the wrong way on derivatives, basing his actions on the movement of interest rates. Today, government units in most states are still not required to provide transparency. New York banks faced significant counter-party exposure in the 1998 LTCM collapse before the Federal Reserve brokered a controversial deleveraging of liabilities.

The U.S. Comptroller of the Currency reports commercial-bank derivative transactions on a quarterly basis. In September 2001, the notional amount of derivatives held by banks increased to a staggering $47.8 trillion.

—*Greg Kaza*

THE TALIBAN's defeat may give the American people a false sense of security. They may convince themselves that we can vanquish those who launch terror attacks on us with the use of our push-button arsenal and massive airpower, precision missiles, and a modest use of ground forces—Special Forces, light infantry, and Marines, or even local militias, such as the Northern Alliance. That would be the wrong lesson to take from Operation Enduring Freedom. The Taliban and their erstwhile Al Qaeda allies played to our strengths by creating an armed force that tried to mirror a conventional army. They utilized bases, barracks, planes, tanks, artillery, motor-vehicle pools, anti-aircraft systems, and fixed command-and-control facilities, and they constructed an elaborate defensive system of trenches to fend off the Northern Alliance. In short, they provided a vast array of targets for our push-button war machine.

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In classic revolutionary-war theory, successful insurgents move through four stages: organization, terror, guerrilla war, and, finally, mobile war. Each stage builds upon its predecessor; by the time the insurgency reaches the guerrilla-war stage, it is in possession of occupied territory, which enables it to construct bases. These bases are used to assemble personnel and equipment, organize them into larger units, and train them to conduct the conventional military operations characteristic of the mobile-war stage. Finally, the insurgent forces slug it out with the conventional forces of the regime that they are attempting to overthrow.

Under the rules of push-button warfare, the insurgents' bases become enticing targets and fatal traps for those who use them. It is likely that America's future foes will learn from the mistakes of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Instead of building barracks and bases and lining up their tanks, planes, artillery, and motor vehicles for us to flatten, revolutionary terrorists will not move out of the terrorist stage. They will become even more dangerous, because their groups will be less structured and hierarchical. The terrorists will resemble members of a cult, receiving religious motivation and broad instructions through radio broadcasts, audio tapes, satellite TV, or the internet. A leader like Osama bin Laden could call on Muslims to attack the United States, and the terrorists would go off and do their own thing. We cannot target such foes from 15,000 feet with precision munitions. The terrorists are living among us, and the most reliable weapon we can deploy to counter them is the traditional spy, who can mingle among them undetected.

Nonstate Islamic groups have demonstrated a disquieting ability to take the war to the American homeland and have shown genius, flexibility, focus, and patience in their attacks on the United States. Does anyone doubt they will try again, as the botched attempt to blow up an American Airlines flight with a shoe bomb demonstrated? The world today is a very dangerous place. As the ancient, ongoing conflict between Islam and the West heats up, that danger will grow. The sooner we wake up to that fact, the better we can counter the threat.

—*Morgan Norval*

VLADIMIR PUTIN's minister of "emergency situations," Sergei Shoygu, has been particularly busy this winter, since the usual unpleasantness associated with Russia's harsh climate has been made worse by the country's crumbling infrastructure. In October and November, entire villages in Yakutia were swept away as huge ice flows jammed the rivers, causing massive flooding, while January saw Southern Russia's Black Sea coast buried by an unusual blizzard and the country's Pacific coast frozen solid by waves of arctic air. Soviet-era buildings simply collapsed under the weight of snowdrifts and floodwaters, while much of the country was left without heat or electricity for prolonged periods, as dilapidated power stations failed and rusty water lines burst. Meanwhile, aging gas lines broke, blowing a number of residential buildings (and their residents) to smithereens—a wintertime disaster fatalistic Russians have grown accustomed to in recent years.

If natural disasters and collapsing, exploding, and frozen buildings weren't enough to convince Vladimir Putin that the *iznos* ("wear and tear") of Russia's urban, industrial, and technological infrastructure has reached crisis level, the poor performance of Shoygu's army of *spacitely* (Emergency Situations Ministry rescue workers—literally, "saviors"), equipped with out-of-date, broken-down, and poorly serviced planes, boats, and helicopters likely did.

In Chechnya, ill-fed, underdressed, and underpaid (or simply unpaid) Russian troops suffered through another winter campaign, while the pro-Moscow government in Grozny complained that aid promised for rebuilding the republic's war-torn landscape had either not arrived or simply disappeared. Freezing and sickly refugees packed the camps in neighboring Ingushetia. In other words, it was business as usual.

Meanwhile, the prominent Moscow daily *Izvestiya* proclaimed that the Russian-American honeymoon—the result of a September 11-induced shotgun wedding—was over. President George W. Bush, having announced that the Russian president was his Best Friend in the Whole World, embarked on a number of highly unfriendly acts: Having tossed out the ABM treaty after giving Putin the impression that the United States would develop anti-missile components within treaty boundaries, Bush has insisted on reducing strategic weapons without a formal treaty, while merely shelving—not destroying—thousands of nuclear warheads. Moreover, the White House wants to resume nuclear testing and appears to be digging in for the long run in Russia's backyard, Central Asia. To add insult to injury, Washington has returned to carping about the war in Chechnya and has decided that the Kremlin's closure of gangster/oligarch Boris Berezovsky's TV6 threatens "human rights." Putin has kept insisting, however, that the new era of Russian cooperation with the West is just beginning.

What can he be thinking? Why has he bent over backward to accommodate Bush, risking his political future, should Russia's oligarchical elite decide that his policies are not yielding any serious returns?

To answer that, we need only keep three things in mind: the phrase *technogenye katastrophy* ("technological catastrophes"—see above); the "2003 problem" (the year when Russia's remaining serviceable infrastructure is set to go the way of Yakutia's villages); and a dissertation Putin wrote for St. Petersburg's prestigious Plekhanov Mining Institute.

The 1997 dissertation, entitled "Strategic Planning for the Development of the Mineral-Raw Material Base of a Region During Formation of Market Conditions," argued that only Russia's lucrative raw-materials-extraction industries, especially oil and gas, could provide the needed capital to modernize the country's industrial and technological base.

Thus Putin, some argue, hopes to convince the West, including the United States, that Russia is a more reliable oil supplier than the Arab-dominated OPEC cartel. The Kremlin could tap the huge Western oil market, tie the West to Russian oil, and use the proceeds to rebuild the shattered country. To achieve this end, the ex-KGB colonel is willing to risk a great deal—and accept what many Russians see as Bush's insults.

—*Denis Petrov*

BEFORE CHRISTMAS, Peter Brimelow used my article "Happy Holidays? Bah! Humbug!" (*Vital Signs*, December 2001) to kick off *VDare.com*'s annual War Against Christmas competition. Since then, I have received a steady stream of correspondence—some of it sharply critical, but most of it extremely favorable.

Of course, not everyone liked the essay. I learned that my piece was "ungenerous," "unchristian," "inflammatory,"

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"malicious, ignorant, and arrogant," and "so offensive as to demand immediate and forceful rebuttal." I also picked up some revealing history lessons, which show that those discomfited by the public celebration of Christmas tend to subscribe to the darkest possible view of Christianity. For example: "[I]f [the Jews] do not have an equivalent of a Bach Christmas Oratorio, it is because Christians had them penned up in ghettos until the mid-18th century." The same correspondent also hastened to underscore "the hatred the Christian has manifested for non-Christians in the last thousand years" and "the arrogance of the Christians in refusing to accept that others may not believe as they do."

My essay reminded one Hindu correspondent that "Christians came to these shores running away from persecution only to wipe out the native population and unleash slavery." He also implied that the recent spate of killings of Christians in India, though deplorable, was the result of the "aggressive and virulent approach" taken by Christian missionaries there. If I had written about non-Christians in a comparable manner, I suspect that my essay would have received much more attention than it did.

Predictably, some of my correspondents also thought that the current public assault on the celebration of Christmas represented rough justice for past misdeeds. Although my Hindu correspondent deplored the commercialization of Christmas and even expressed agreement with some of my points, he also wrote that "what is good for the goose is good for the gander. . . . Most missionary-run schools in India . . . getting tax-payer funded government aid restrain their students from wearing flowers and having forehead decorations since these are seen as Hindu." I must confess that it is not apparent to me why American schools should consider how missionary academies are run in India when deciding whether to allow American children to sing Christmas carols.

Another writer thought that my nephew wondering why our family did not observe Hanukkah or Kwanza represented "a small dose of what Jewish children have experienced for decades. Until recently Jewish children were inundated with celebrations of Christmas in all public places, including schools." Of course a Jewish child in America wondering about Christmas simply reflects numerical reality: Most of his fellow countrymen celebrate Christmas. A Christian child wondering why his family does not celebrate Hanukkah or Kwanza is reflecting a concerted effort to drive signs of America's Christian and Western heritage out of our public places.

Despite the invective, my critical interlocutors were earnest and generally well meaning. More to the point, they did not fundamentally disagree with me. None of them suggested that the alternative holidays fostered by the multiculturalists were being elevated for their intrinsic value rather than their proximity to Christmas. (Indeed, I was assured that "no Jew denies that Hanukkah has grown in importance out of all proportion to its significance.")

This critical trickle, though, was overwhelmed by a flood of correspondence from people who liked my essay. These positive letters came from a broad spectrum of Americans: university professors and secretaries and school teachers, and all manner of Christians—even some non-Christians. One Jewish writer expressed concern that the public elevation of Hanukkah "does much harm to the sense of perspective that Jewish kids walk away from all of this with. . . . Hanukkah is essentially a holiday to be celebrated in the home and not in the strects or the public places."

This positive response was not confined to conservatives. An abridged version of my essay appeared the Sunday before Christmas in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Pittsburgh's major newspaper. Since the *Post-Gazette* has a conservative competitor, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, it is likely that many of the Pittsburghers who applauded the essay were not ideological conservatives.

The positive response I received was extremely heartening, because it reflected my correspondents' great love for Christmas and their willingness to defend this splendid holiday. One schoolboard member said that she would share the essay with her district's superintendent, principals, and her fellow board members. She also related a skirmish in the War Against Christmas from her Pittsburgh-area district: One mother was given permission to stage a Hanukkah party for all of the second-grade classes, but another who wanted to speak to the children about Christmas was rebuffed.

One letter to the editor published by the *Post-Gazette* exemplified the great love of Christmas and the willingness to defend it that I have seen in so many letters. Bernice Renkawek wrote: "I am ashamed to say that for the past few years, I have found myself becoming so entangled in political correctness that my own holiday has suffered as a result. I realized this year that it had gotten completely out of control when I didn't wish my regular bus driver a 'Merry Christmas' because I didn't know how it would be taken.

"I wish Mr. Piatak's article had been printed sooner. I wish I had kept my Polish backbone and not given a hoot as to what people would think if I had wished them a Merry Christmas. And above all, I wish I hadn't pushed the celebration of the birth of Jesus into the back seat, under a blanket, where it couldn't be seen and, therefore, wouldn't offend anyone.

"Mr. Piatak said it quite simply. The holiday *is* Christmas. Period. And such a beautiful and wonderful holiday it is. Thanks to him, from now on I will do exactly what I feel in my heart."

There are many people like Bernice Renkawek out there, who will gladly join in the defense of Christmas and be grateful to anyone who champions this incomparable holiday. The only question is this: Are any of our public figures brave enough, or smart enough, to seize this opportunity?

—*Tom Piatak*

OBITER DICTA: Our first poet this month is **Peter Hunt**, a widely published essayist and critic who sits on the editorial board of the *Chesterton Review*. His poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines.

Our second poet is **Catharine Savage Brosman** of New Orleans, Louisiana. Her poetry and prose have appeared in the *New England Review*, the *American Scholar*, the *Southwest Review*, the *Southern Review*, and the *Sewanee Review*, among others. Two collections of her verse, *The Swimmer and Other Poems* (R.L. Barth) and *Places in Mind* (LSU Press), were published last year.

Chronicles' cover and inside illustrations this month are provided by **Stephen Warde Anderson**, a self-taught artist from Rockford, Illinois. Mr. Anderson is affiliated with the Phyllis Kind Gallery in New York, Dean Jensen Gallery in Milwaukee, Aron Packer and Earth Works Gallery in Chicago, and Webb Gallery in Waxahachie, Texas.

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by Thomas Fleming

Anti-Imperial Judo

The basic principle of judo, so I have been told, is to use your enemy's strength against him. I was forced to apply this principle more than once in college, when my athletic friends, invigorated by the joy of youth and a fifth of Jack Daniels, would suddenly realize how pleasant it would be to dangle the first available lightweight from the balcony. They meant no harm, really, but they did not know their own strength. More than one of them, after lurching in my direction, ended up sprawled out on the floor.

I had learned more irenic ways by graduate school. Rather than assault the housemate who refused to wash dishes after one of his dinner parties, I simply boycotted kitchen duty and dined out all of the time. I thought he would see the error of his ways, but he did not, and so I found myself, one chilly day in early May (the seventh, in fact) of 1969, pouring Lysol on a tub of dishes in the backyard and hosing them off. Nelson, my housemate's college roommate, stopped by to commiserate, and we were joined by an undergraduate from next door, a behemoth of a senior who should have been a lineman for the Tarheels. I shall call him Bill, because that was his name.

"Say," exclaimed Nelson, "Do you know what day it is today? It's the 15th anniversary of Dien Bien Phu."

"You mean," said I, trying to imitate the Stalinist language of the student left, with which we were all made too familiar in those days, "the final defeat of French colonial aggression in Southeast Asia?"

"That's not very funny," Bill grunted ominously. Bill's family were Goldwaterite textile manufacturers from western North Carolina (Andy Griffith country), and the Vietnam War was sacred to him, though not sacred enough to induce this rich man's son to volunteer.

"Not funny for the French, certainly," I quipped.

"That does it," said Bill, who made a terrific lunge at me. Stepping nimbly aside and taking him by the hand, I escorted him into the air, where his 225 pounds executed a beautiful flip, landing him boom on his back with the breath knocked out of him.

"My God," said Nelson, looking at the unconscious Bill. "When he gets up, he'll kill you." I was thinking fast. My first thought was that, if I stomped on his head hard enough, Bill might never get up, but this seemed a messy and complicated strategy, especially since Bill was simply being Bill. Men who are predictably violent are rarely troublesome, and if they play by the rules, they have my respect.

I had just decided to go into the house and lock the doors and windows when the light came back to Bill's eyes. Bellowing in rage, he jumped to his feet, and before I could make it to the door, he had grabbed me by the knees, lifted my 130 pounds high over his head, and crashed me face first onto the ground. My head struck a rock, and I was out for some minutes. As I came to, Bill (still smarting from his first-round defeat) stood over me, threatening like a bully out of the Penrod stories: " . . . and if you think about suing, my old man is president of the textile manufacturers' association, and in this state, it means the cops can throw you in jail for a year just on his say-so . . . "

What a world we are living in, I thought, where a bully has to worry about being sued and stoops to bragging about his father's connections. What could he possibly be thinking of? Perhaps the unfairness of it all, that the rich and powerful must occasionally suffer the pains reserved for the poor and the weak.

I wonder, what were the French thinking after Dien Bien Phu, or the Americans who picked up the discarded torch of European colonialism? Eisenhower, as I recall, had said something about the need to defend American business interests in Southeast Asia, but I have never known what those interests were.

In general, there are only two or three justifications for empire. Some empires have begun when a brave people were forced to defend themselves from aggression; in other cases, a surplus population is sent out in search of new land. Eventually, however, empires confer two benefits on the imperial race: tribute and cheap labor, and the pursuit of taxpayers and slaves is the chief occupation of every empire.

The citizens of ruling nations are not supposed to pay taxes, except for customs duties. The definition of full citizenship, in fact, should include exemption from all taxes except tariffs. To the extent there are full citizens in the United States, they are those people whose lawyers help their servants in the government draw up the tax codes that leave in the loopholes that exempt so much money from taxes that the rich have some left over to spend on Congress to ensure high income taxes for us and low tariffs for them. The CEOs of the airline industry are citizens; the pilots, flight attendants, and passengers are merely subjects.

Cheap labor, the other goal of empire and conquest, used to take the form of slaves. It was the dream of Caesar's soldiers to catch a couple of healthy Gauls or Germans who could fetch a high price in the slave market.

Wherever the Romans went to stay, they built up the imperial infrastructure: solid roads and bridges over which legions marched and merchants traveled; a postal system that allowed commands to be sent from Milan to Hadrian's Wall to Damascus with amazing speed, and an increasingly centralized military and bureaucratic structure that relieved the farmers and townsmen from the need to defend themselves or accept responsibility.

In Trajan's halcyon days, of course, the Roman towns were largely self-governing, and the provincials (many of them only a generation or so away from vigorous barbarity) could defend themselves if necessary. To meet the crises of a shrinking economy and barbarian invasions, however, emperors such as Diocletian had imposed a military command model on the civilized world, so that when the Goths and Avars and Slavs came breaking into the imperial territory, wave after wave, the provincials were as helpless as the decadent people of Rome herself. And the innumerable miles of roads and bridges made it all the easier for the barbarians to raid and pillage their way across the empire. They must have approached Roman towns with much the same spirit as Jesse James entered a fat Yankee bank. Many of them knew the

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territory, of course, since the Romans had become too self-indulgent to fight their own battles (or plant their own crops) and exploited the sturdy barbarians as a source of cheap labor and expendable soldiers.

Empires fall because of their own weaknesses, but the enemies of empire do not have to understand that. So long as they can play anti-imperial judo by using the empire's strength against itself, and the more civilized and developed the empire is, the more vulnerable it is to conquest, once its people begin to lose the will to resist. The Roman Britons, menaced by Germanic and Scandinavian pirates, appealed repeatedly to Rome for protection. Their final answer came in the sad message telling them they had to look out for their own defense. If there is any truth to the story of Arthur, he was a civilized man, perhaps a Roman officer, who defended his little fragment of civilization by fair means and foul.

So here we are, the master nation of a nearly global empire that is envied and hated around the world. We have turned our own citizens into tribute-paying subjects, and we are spreading the "American way of life" across the world in an endless quest for cheap labor. We no longer make our own cars and shoes, and for the most part, we are unwilling to fight our own battles. In suppressing our frontier brush-wars, we rely on the high-tech weapons of mass destruction that are a confession of impotence, and to staff the army that hardly ever fights, we turn increasingly to men who do not belong to the cultural and ethnic majority: African Americans, Mexican Americans, and even Mexican Mexicans. Many of these soldiers are fine men, proud to be serving America. Some of them will wake up one day to despise the spoiled suburban weaklings who expect others to do their fighting for them. Then, when it is too late, an American president will contemplate the fate of Romulus Augustulus, the puppet-emperor the Germans learned to do without.

America is different, people tell me. Yes, of course, we are bigger, and we went from being healthy primitives to corrupt effeminates in a mere hundred years. In the West, the Romans hung on in one form or another for a millennium and a half (if we confine ourselves to their traditional dates). We have been in North America for less than four centuries, and we have been a nation-state for only two. At this point, the Romans were just hitting their stride.

But we *are* bigger, and our imperial infrastructure is exponentially greater (though not as solidly built) than anything the Romans dreamed of: globally integrated markets, travel, and communication, and a bureaucracy that presumes to set the rules and lay down the law "from China to Peru." The bigger they are, the harder they fall—as in judo. Our postal system turns out to be an excellent vehicle for spreading deadly microbes; with just a little force applied to a symbol like the World Trade Center, our integrated markets can be forced to hemorrhage investors' money; and our vast network of air travel enables a Pakistani terrorist to take time off from his German university to consult with his superiors in Afghanistan before jetting off to plot a bombing in America, and the plane in which he flies turns out to make the best of all possible weapons. It is as if the Goths fought their way to Rome by beating the Romans to death with the bricks from their own roads.

The lessons of history are plain, but they will not be read by smart people like Donald Rumsfeld ("the sexiest man in America," according to a conservative magazine whose editors thought they were paying a compliment). Mr. Rumsfeld, Paul O'Neil, and the entire Bush Cabinet, which is filled with smart, competent men, see the globe as a set of interrelated markets to be controlled and manipulated from Washington, D.C., and a few satellite centers. Diocletian was a smart man, too, and a patriotic imperial soldier. He tried to save the world by carrying it on his shoulders and on the shoulders of the men he appointed Augustus or Caesar, and so long as there were a few men as good as himself or Constantius Chlorus, the scheme was made to work, though not for long.

Diocletian took his name from a Roman *municipium*, Doclea (or Dioclea), later called Duklja. The ruins are just outside modern Podgorica, formerly Titograd, formerly Podgorica, the capital of the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro. By car, it is a few hours from the Adriatic coast and not too much farther to Diocletian's great palace at Split, where he retired to plant cabbages. By some time in the seventh century, Slavic invaders had marched down the Roman roads leading from Singidunum (Belgrade) and Naissus over the mountains to Doclea, and they had taken over Dalmatia.

Within a few centuries, the Slavs and Latins had constructed a fairly brilliant Christian civilization, both Orthodox and Catholic, that was reaching its height in the final years of the 14th century, just when the Turks arrived. Marching up the same old Roman roads that the Slavs had gone down, softening up the population with a series of terrorist raids that were the usual Muslim preliminary to major invasions, the Turks looted and raped (both men and women) their way across the Balkans, turning their victims into slaves or tribute-paying peasants.

Of course, the Turks took advantage of internal instabilities, and of the divisions between Bulgars, Greeks, and Serbs, but they could also use their victims' civilization against them. People with much to lose will come to accommodation. In Bosnia, Turks made converts or stole the Christian children; elsewhere (as among the Greeks), they recruited clerks and bureaucrats. Many noblemen were willing to acknowledge Turkish suzerainty in return for a fragile right to retain their own property. In the end, however, as the saying goes, *il Turco è sempre Turco*. And the only choice they and other Muslim rulers presented was to convert or to fight, and fight hard. It has often been said of Turkish subjects who did not renounce their faith that he who would not be a slave must be a savage.

The ominous fact of the past few months is the number of nominal Christians in Britain and America who are renouncing their faith. Since September 11, Islam has increasingly higher approval ratings in opinion polls. This is partly a tribute to the gullibility of Americans who believe what they see on TV or read in the *New York Times*, but—who knows—it may also be a nod of respect for the winning religion from a people whose love of winners and contempt for the underdog is well known.

Montenegrins were made of different stuff, and when the Turks overran their country at the end of the 15th century, they took to the mountains and lived like wolves, fighting against their own people who had converted to Islam. They lured armies into the hills and pushed boulders upon their heads before swooping down on the scattered Turkish forces. Three hundred years ago on Christmas Eve, they rose up and gave the renegade men the same choice the Turks had given. Savage they were. But they were free and Christian. What are we?

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Champlain's "Habitation"—Port Royal, Nova Scotia, Canada

Peter Hunt

After long winter, June sun revives, like wine
In valleys of the Loire, the agued, sallowed
Spirit, and here under a cloudless sky
By this green, tranquil bay, an alien
Ship seems an impossibility. This compact
Palisaded village-fort, though only
A replica of Champlain's "Habitation,"
Drowses in the sun of memory.
Port-Royal, its fleur-de-lis aloft,
Hewn rough but straight, offers a world
In miniature: a place for soldier, farmer,
Priest and sailor, trades of every kind,
And opposite the blacksmith's shop that forge
Of souls, confessional and chapel, had its nook.

Perhaps it was a day like this when early
Dawn and long twilight had drawn their seedlings
Upwards into warmth, and as they tilled,
The men from Normandy, Lorraine and La Rochelle
Saw champaigns rich, and golden harvests sprung
From miracles of work in drawn-out Summer days,
That, led by spying greed, intent on blasting
Champlain's infant village from this land,
The British ships, creeping up the tide,
Blazed suddenly two dozen rounds of fire.
Thus, Champlain's work through lonely, scurvied Winter,
The sweat of several Summers, was reduced to
Smoking rubble, as those who manned the guns
Too late above the ground, saw hissing cannon-balls
Fall short, while smoke and orange flames broke through
The timber roofs. Within an hour the rest
Was blown sky-high, with powder-magazine
And arquebus, with tools and hard-won food,
While helpless men stood stricken in the fields.

Champlain had steered the settlement to this
Though Winters howled, and nights set in like iron
With electric threads of icy air wiring
Through the chinks and cracks between the logs,
As fires of spruce and fir roared up the chimneys.
When ghostly men lay rank in rows and hunched
On benches, rocked in hammocks soaked
In fever-sweat, this seigneur-soldier planned
On ways to bring his mustard-seed of faith
To sturdy growth. Two years gone by, he stirred
The fires of chivalry, his Order of Good Cheer
Transforming misery, despair, into
Festivity, replacing boredom,
Weariness and aching dreams of France

With giant roasts of venison, browned quails
And partridge dressed with greens and carrots
Won in triumph from the salted, many-Wintered
Ground, and songs that rose like Lazarus
From tombs of Winter winding-sheets that locked
Them in, so far from vineyards, village
Warmth, and homely kitchen fires. Champlain
Himself, no devotee of trade, put crops before
Furs, sustained by visions of wide fields
Of waving corn, meadowland, and steepled towns
Or reborn Chartres, Rheims, or Rouen,
Illumined with the tints he saw in mounds
Of gleaming snow in early April sun,
The new revival drawing on the old.

Now, as sea-birds wheeled and scavengers
Moved in, and remnants of his band went home
Or joined communities which sprang from zeal
Like his, he turned his face towards vaster realms,
Seeing in the wilderness of years ahead
New worlds of forest, lake and tribal lore
To be subdued or break his stubborn, Gallic heart.

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by Philip Jenkins

Homophobia and Its Enemies

It is easy enough to criticize the postmodern approaches that have become orthodoxy in humanities departments over the last couple of decades, but if postmodernism has taught us anything of value, it is that we are prisoners of our language. The words we use constrain the expression of our thoughts. Since postmodern academics tend to be on the left or far left, they generally ignore what is probably the best single example of this phenomenon—namely, the changes in the English language that make it all but impossible to challenge the most extreme claims made for the legal and social status of homosexuality. Supporters of "gay rights" have won, are winning, and will continue to win, and their victory can be epitomized by the brilliant success of one word: "homophobia."

Let me illustrate with a hypothetical example, one that may not be hypothetical for much longer. A state plans a sweeping package of gay-rights legislation, which would establish domestic-partner benefits; make civil unions equal to heterosexual marriages; permit gay adoptions; and vastly expand hate-crimes law to penalize any demonstration, remark, or writing deemed hostile to homosexual behavior. The community is divided. One activist—call him John—believes the measures are worthwhile and long overdue. Another, David, has a much more ambiguous response. Believing as he does in "live and let live," he does not want to see private homosexual conduct regulated and thinks workplace discrimination is unacceptable. Still, he is worried that the new laws will suppress free speech, and his religious beliefs do not allow him to see homosexual "marriage" as comparable, in any way to heterosexual. David is anything but an extremist, he just thinks these laws go too far.

How would these divergent views be characterized in the media? John represents "tolerance." He is liberal, "gay-friendly," and these terms have highly positive connotations. But what is David? He is "anti-gay," intolerant, hateful, and, above all, "homophobic." Taken literally, this last word is virtually meaningless. As remarkably few people seem to know, "homophobic" simply means "fear of the same," and logically, it should perhaps be a term for people who favor change of any sort. Of course, it means far more in modern parlance. It means someone who is *afraid* of homosexuals and homosexuality.

But why should anyone fear homosexuality? A generation of post-Kinsey scholars has told us that to oppose any aspect of homosexuality—any legal or social change whatsoever—signifies fear, the fear that comes from denying your own inner sexual turmoil. To be homophobic, therefore, is to be a self-hating, self-denying homosexual. Didn't you see *American Beauty*? Anyone familiar with modern psychology realizes immediately that the vociferously anti-queer Col. Frank Fitts is going to turn out to be a closet case, and a violent one at that. Why else would anyone criticize homosexuals?

Homophobia, put simply, is bad news. It is, above all, a pathology, and who wants to be pathological? Who wants to be a hater?

In no other area of political life can one side of a debate not advance its views without being instantly condemned by a label. Although the media are almost universally in favor of abortion rights, they concede critics of abortion the positive title of "pro-life," and the term "anti-feminist" is by no means entirely negative. Reasonable people can disagree on these issues. Even the epithet "racist" has lost much of its force through massive overuse, and anyone who throws the label around too freely invites mockery. Yet "homophobic" is still a knockdown, a killer word.

Though I spoke of the tyranny of language as a postmodern concept, it does have older antecedents, especially in the writings of George Orwell. Among his other claims to fame, Orwell may have influenced the way we speak, and how we think about language, more than any English writer since Shakespeare. More than any specific word or phrase that he coined (thoughtcrime, Newspeak, Big Brother), his greatest contribution was in conceiving the idea that shaping language made it impossible to express seditious beliefs—and perhaps even to think them. In a Newspeak society, the word "equal" has only a scientific or mathematical sense, so that a group of cattle of the same size and weight would be described as equal; the term, however has absolutely no possible social or political connotation. Theoretically, you could formulate the Newspeak sentence "all mans are equal," but it is as demonstrably false as the modern statement that "all men have green hair," and anyone who would utter such a sentence about human equality is almost certainly deranged. Eliminate seditious thought, the leaders of Oceania believed, and society would move steadily along, untroubled by the possibility of dissidence.

Yet, for all the brilliance of his analysis, Orwell was wrong on one main thing: the notion that changing language made certain ideas forever unthinkable. Totalitarian states are not eternal; they crumble from within. (Just look at the former Soviet bloc.) Even in the most unpromising circumstances, the tyranny of language can be overthrown. We can usefully look at what the original gay-rights movement did in the 1960's. When stigmatized as perverts, they sabotaged that word, partly making it a joke ("Perverts Unite!"), but also explicitly challenging the label through political organization. Today, the word "pervert" is all but extinct in serious discourse, and anyone who uses it would be, well, someone like Frank Fitts: a homophobe, a hater of himself and others. The word "pervert" was confronted, defeated, and effectively eliminated from the English language. This experience offers an essential lesson for anyone hoping to fight future battles over social policy. Identify the killer words and destroy them before they destroy you.

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Tribunals for Terror

President Bush's Kangaroo Court

by Samuel Francis

Stephen Wande Anderson

When President Bush signed an executive order on November 13 that authorized the trial of non-U.S. citizens on charges of terrorism before special military tribunals, the response from the political right was almost—though not quite—unanimously supportive. Not only did the attorney general himself enthusiastically defend the tribunals, so did such luminaries as the conservative movement's perennial expert on constitutional and legal questions, Judge Robert Bork (in *National Review*), as well as such odd bedfellows as the *Weekly Standard* and Pat Buchanan. Not all on the right went along with the President's order, however. Somewhat surprisingly, dissent issued from the pen of *New York Times* columnist William Safire and the editorial page of the *Washington Times*, which, on the day after Attorney General John Ashcroft's inept efforts to defend the tribunals before the Senate Judiciary Committee, remarked that "the administration has failed thus far to make the case for military tribunals and keeping detainees' names secret."

These responses from what remains of the American "right" are interesting, if only because they disclose what may be some evolving philosophical fault lines that cut across the usual boundaries of paleoconservative and neoconservative. Adherents to neoconservatism might be expected to support the tribunals simply because the ideological fetish of "national security" is so all-devouring among them, and the principal case for the tribunals seemed to rest on the purported national security needs of the federal government in a time of war and crisis. The neocon enthusiasm for the "war against terrorism," and especially for expanding it to just about every Muslim and Arabic state on the map, extended well beyond the foreign military and diplomatic involvements that war brings. It also encompassed the less obvious (to some, at least) but no less necessary augmentations of state power that the American Civil War, World War I, and World War II engendered, and the vision of the proponents of Big Government conservatism managing the expanded warfare state was itself sufficient for neoconservatives to justify secret military trials of Arab terrorists. Given the militantly pro-Zionist and anti-Arab proclivities of the neocons, most did not have to reach very far. Nevertheless, some—Safire and the *Washington Times* editorial page—were able to restrain such inclinations and preserve a skeptical distance from the administration's proposals.

Admittedly, the neocons who offered defenses of the tribunals proved to be considerably more adept than either the President or the attorney general. The President's first line of defense, proffered the same day he issued the order, was that "mass deaths, mass injuries and massive destruction of property" from terrorism could "place at risk the continuity of the operations of the United States government," and it was, therefore, "not practicable" to require trials for terrorist suspects in accordance with the "principles of law and rules of evidence" that apply in ordinary courts. Two weeks later, when controversy about the tribunals was rising, he repeated much the same appeal to necessity, telling a group of U.S. attorneys that

> Noncitizens, non-U.S. citizens who plan and/or commit mass murder are more than criminal suspects. They are unlawful combatants who seek to destroy our country and our way of life. And if I determine that it is in the national security interest of our great land to try by military commission those who make war on America, then we will do so.

Mr. Ashcroft, appearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on December 6, did little more than invoke the President's "power as commander in chief," declare that he would not divulge information that might threaten national security,

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and generally insult both members of the committee and the public who had dared express reservations about the secret tribunals by claiming that virtually anyone who raised such questions was aiding the terrorists. "To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: your tactics only aid terrorists." This line of counteraccusation was repeated by the neoconservatives, who denounced what the *Weekly Standard* called the "Crybaby Left," and by *Human Events*, which went so far as to run a lead story calling Judiciary Committee Chairman Sen. Patrick Leahy, one of the main critics of the tribunals, "Osama's Enabler in Congress." The idea that secret military courts—answerable only to the secretary of defense and the President, able to convict people outside the ordinary rules of evidence, and empowered to hand down death sentences—might represent a danger to liberty was dismissed out of hand by most neoconservatives and the mainstream conservative movement alike.

To be sure, there were better apologies besides the transparently lame ones offered by President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft. One such, invoked both by Judge Bork and White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales, was that the tribunals were needed to spare civilian jurors and court officials the dangers and intimidation that terrorists might inflict on them if the trials of the terrorists' comrades were held in public. Another was that, by allowing for secrecy, the tribunals made the use of classified information possible. In ordinary courts, such secrets could not be disclosed to juries made up of civilians without the proper security clearances.

But neither reason is valid. Throughout American history, gangsters like Al Capone and cult killers like Charles Manson have faced trials in public courts and been convicted, sentenced, and punished without any significant intimidation of juries or courts. Indeed, trials of terrorists like Timothy McVeigh and those involved in the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 have also been held without mishap. There is no reason to suppose that trying Al Qaeda suspects publicly would be any more dangerous, and if such threats did appear, they could be dealt with as necessary.

As for the argument about the need for secrecy, classified information, if relevant to the cases being tried, would still have to be divulged to the tribunals and, presumably, to the defendants themselves and their lawyers. The military officers who make up the tribunals may not be any more trustworthy than civilian jurors and probably will not hold the high-level security clearances (above Top Secret) needed to be entrusted with classified information about sources and methods of intelligence collection, though they might be in a better position to understand the significance of such secrets. Disclosing such information to the defendants and their lawyers—if they are allowed to put up any defense for themselves—would be far more of a security risk than disclosing it to any American citizen.

Mr. Gonzales and others also argued that the military tribunals, unlike ordinary courts, will be able to "consider the broadest range of relevant evidence to reach their verdicts." In other words, they will not be bound by the rules of evidence that govern what is admitted into regular courts of law. The most obvious way to construe this argument is that the government knows it lacks the evidence under ordinary rules to convict those it wants to convict and, therefore, has to set up new rules. The procedure is hardly consistent with elementary notions of justice (which demand certain and established rules for determining what is true), but it also raises the question of how the lawyers and court officials involved in the tribunals could possibly be trained to deal with whatever new "rules of evidence" are adopted.

Not unexpectedly, Judge Bork came up with some of the more intriguing defenses, especially with regard to precedents both historical and constitutional. Most of the defenders of the tribunals, including the Bush administration, cited the case of German saboteurs captured in 1942 who were tried and executed by military tribunals established by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The procedure was upheld in a Supreme Court case, *Ex parte Quirin* (1942), that Judge Bork invoked. But the case of the German saboteurs occurred during a constitutionally declared war and involved enemy agents who had entered the United States out of uniform for the express purpose of committing acts of war. Under traditionally accepted rules of war, it is permissible to shoot such enemy personnel when captured behind the lines. Much of the argument of *Quirin* seems to have revolved around these elements of the case. It is not clear that the ruling applies to civilians who, in what is still legally peacetime, committed (or were accomplices of those who committed) what, under the law, remain the ordinary criminal offenses of hijacking and murder, regardless of how atrocious the offenses were or how many victims they claimed. In any case, some of the German saboteurs were American citizens, and the court—perhaps ominously—held that this was irrelevant. The current tribunals apply only to noncitizens, although, as Judge Bork argued, they could (and, in his mind, should) apply to Americans citizens as well.

Defenders of the tribunals pointed to several precedents in U.S. history for similar procedures. Judge Bork noted that "George Washington employed such tribunals freely," though he also acknowledged that this was before the Constitution had been written (a detail that would seem to render Washington's practice irrelevant), and that Abraham Lincoln had done the same during the Civil War. Lincoln did indeed, and the Supreme Court, in *Ex parte Milligan* (1866), held that military tribunals for civilians are not permissible in areas where civil courts remain open. Indeed, Justice David Davis wrote that the Constitution is not suspended in time of emergency and that it remains "a law for rulers and people, equally in time of war and peace," a ruling that would seem unequivocally to strike down what the Bush administration has in mind. Understandably, Judge Bork neglected to mention the *Milligan* case.

Yet another historical precedent sometimes cited for the tribunals was the trial (if that is the word for it) of those implicated (as well as some not implicated) in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. In fact, the trial of the Lincoln assassins shows exactly what is wrong with military tribunals. Eight defendants were tried (Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders were named as accomplices), and not one of them escaped punishment. Mrs. Mary Suratt, mother of one of John Wilkes Booth's alleged accomplices and owner of the boarding house where some of the conspirators lived and plotted, was hanged. She was almost certainly innocent, and one of the other three defendants convicted and executed was probably not mentally competent to stand trial. Dr. Samuel Mudd, who set Booth's broken leg after the assassination without knowing who Booth was or what he had done (and wound up serving four years in a military prison because of it), was also innocent. Two other men sentenced to life imprisonment had aided Booth in earlier plots to kidnap Lincoln but had nothing to do with the actual as-

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sassination, and one of them died in prison two years later. The eighth defendant, sentenced to a six-year prison term but released with Mudd and the surviving prisoner in 1869, might actually have been involved in Booth's plot. Throughout the trial, the defendants were kept in chains while in the courtroom—and in solitary confinement while out of it—and were not allowed to communicate with anyone without the approval of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who planned and authorized the proceedings. Stanton wanted the trial to be held in secret so evidence implicating Confederate leaders could be developed, but Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, pressured by reporters, was instrumental in opening the trial to the public. Far from being a reputable "precedent" for much of anything, the trial of the Lincoln "assassins" (the real assassin—Booth—had been dead for quite a while by the time of the trial) was one of the great miscarriages of justice in American history.

The disregard for the elementary rights of the defendants in the case of the alleged Lincoln assassins illustrates why military tribunals are not generally a good idea. Indeed, one of the problems with the whole concept is that they confuse different governmental functions. In the first place, the tribunals confuse military expertise with justice. There is no reason to think that either the military officers who will act as the magistrates of such tribunals or the secretary of defense who is supposed to be the only authority permitted to review the trials will possess the slightest legal training or knowledge. Military personnel are not trained to enforce or administer the law, which is why, in the United States, they normally do not. Similarly, the tribunals confuse the functions of war and law enforcement, so that men who would ordinarily be considered criminals are now considered to be prisoners of war, even though no war has been formally declared. Criminals and enemy soldiers are not the same thing. Defenders of the Bush tribunals often cite the President's allegedly inherent power as Commander in Chief to deal with POWs as he sees fit, but even if he has such power, those who would face the tribunals he created do not belong in that category: POWs are not usually put on trial.

One of the major problems with the tribunals is that there is no need for them at all. Whatever the disruptions caused to American life by the events of September 11, the courts and the government are conducting business as usual. Absolutely nothing has happened to "place at risk the continuity of the operations of the United States government" or to render trying alleged terrorists before ordinary courts "not practicable." In fact, if any large numbers of suspects are going to be tried and convicted, it would be well for the American public (not to mention the people of other nations, especially in the Arabic world) to observe the trials to determine whether the suspects are really guilty. If very many defendants wind up facing death sentences because military tribunals, held in secret and operating by rules of evidence and procedure unknown to ordinary justice, convicted and sentenced them, the nation could be facing a bitterly divisive legacy for decades within and without its boundaries.

The defendants before the tribunals are supposed to be either people accused of involvement in terrorism residing abroad (especially in Afghanistan) or, in some cases, living in the United States, though not citizens. But as Judge Bork wrote,

> If there is a problem with Bush's order, it is the exemption of U.S. citizens from trials before military tribunals. *Quirin* held that Americans can be tried there, and it is clear that they should. The trial of American terrorists in criminal court would pose all the problems of trying foreign terrorists there: The prosecution would have to choose between safeguarding our intelligence capacity and trying the terrorist. The terrorist could well go free.

That, of course, is a possibility. Guilty men sometimes do get off, and that is regrettable; it is, however, unheard of in the Anglo-American legal tradition to advocate irregular judicial procedures to prevent it from happening. The cliché is that it is better for a hundred guilty men to go free than for one innocent man to hang. It is also unheard of—even among most defenders of the Bush order—to advocate the trial of American citizens before such tribunals. Edwin Stanton seems to have a worthy successor in Judge Bork. The underlying problem with the tribunals is precisely that they might be used against American citizens or serve as a precedent for such use. Administration officials from the President and attorney general on down have steadfastly denied that they will be. Now comes Judge Bork to demand that they should be. Here, again, is exactly what is wrong with military tribunals. They can easily be used for purposes other than those for which they have been established, to the point that regular courts and their procedures could become functionless.

The problem is not mainly that military tribunals may help hang or shoot a few Arabs who may not have been involved in terrorism or that they might deny guilty terrorists due process or violate any "rights" that foreign suspects might be supposed to possess under a Constitution to which they have never owed any allegiance. Indeed, if there is really compelling proof of a foreign suspect's involvement in terrorism, it ought to be perfectly legitimate to shoot him on sight, without any trial at all. Doing so might be outside the law, but if we really are at war, the law does not necessarily pertain, and the U.S. government has mounted deliberate assassinations during wartime before. The advantage of using extralegal assassinations against known enemies of the country is that it preserves the legal system from the very kind of corruption with which President Bush's military tribunals threaten to infect it.

Like so much else that is happening today, the creation of military tribunals serves to acclimatize the American public to the erosion of civil liberties and the rule of law. It is not what the secret military courts may do to real terrorists that is worrisome—especially to "conservatives" who claim to defend the rule of law and the Constitution—but the habits of servitude that these and similar measures, adopted with all the pompous invocation of "national security" and patriotism, may easily induce in a population already largely indifferent to the heritage of liberty under law that is being abandoned, as well as the prospect of outright autocracy deriving from the claim that the President alone may decide who is a threat to national security and how he shall be tried. That is exactly what President Bush's statement—"And if I determine that it is in the national security interest of our great land to try by military commission those who make war on America, then we will do so"—implies.

Terrorism, crime, and war all come and go. Republican liberty and the institutions and habits that sustain it can survive those dangers easily enough. What they cannot survive is their own subversion by those who appeal to patriotism and the "necessity" that war always imposes as justifications for state powers unknown to and unrestrained by law and tradition. c

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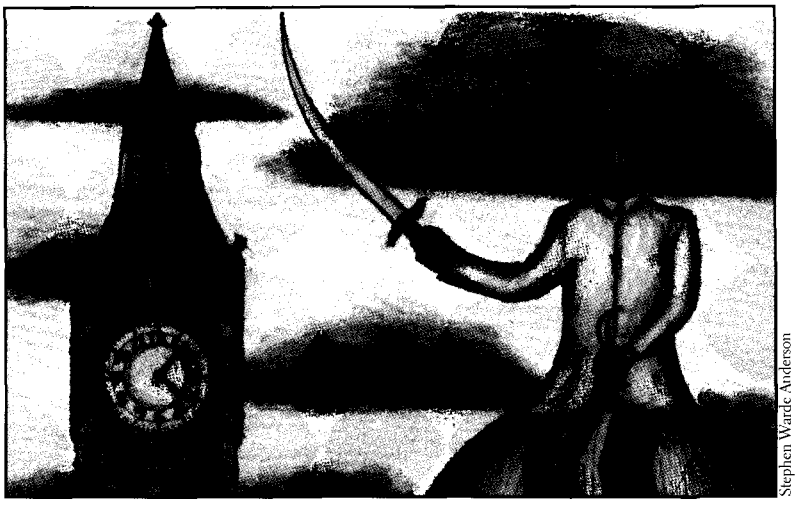
Nor Shall My Sword Rest in My Hand

by Philip Jenkins



Stephen Warde Anderson

When the United States government was seeking to retaliate for the terrorist attacks last year, it was not too difficult to name the obvious targets: Afghanistan (of course), Iraq, Somalia, and the rest of the world's bandit states. Opponents of military intervention could make few effective arguments, but one point that was quite widely raised should not be dismissed out of hand. Yes, argued the critics, the hijackers and their accomplices had spent long periods in sinister countries like Afghanistan; however, they had also trained, armed, and prepared in several European nations, such as Germany, France, and Britain. So why should U.S. forces be bombing Kabul rather than Paris or Berlin? Obviously, European governments were not supporting terrorist organizations in the same way that the Taliban were; nonetheless, most of the extreme Islamist groups were and are operating openly in democratic European nations, in a way that would never be tolerated in most Middle Eastern societies. The ongoing *jihad* against Western Christendom is firmly based within the West, in the cities of Europe and North America.

The seeming desire of liberal Western societies to assist in their own suicide might be seen as a kind of collective social pathology. It also has a critical economic dimension, since unrestricted travel and migration are fundamental tenets of the whole notion of globalization. Since the 1950's, European nations have all but eliminated restrictions on immigration from poorer countries, and the heritage of colonialism has meant that many of these new immigrants have come from Muslim lands. Meanwhile, European states have been encouraged to abandon their distinctive cultural traditions, to create a brave new United States of Europe that is free of national or racial distinctions and dedicated to promoting the corporate good. Obviously, religion would play no great role in the new European order, since no intelligent person takes this Christian nonsense too seriously anymore. And surely, it would not be too long before the new immigrants abandoned their particular prejudices and joined the ex-Christians and ex-Jews in the common search for profit. The problem is that, while the old Christendom was fast abandoning its identity, the new Muslim populations were reinforcing theirs, as global Islam has been galvanized by a potent religious and political revival. As a direct consequence of economic globalization, Europe is now home to millions of Muslims who are pledged to resist that very process—and a significant number of these are prepared to fight to the death to resist a global capitalist order. Globalization creates the means, motive, and opportunity by which the deadliest enemies of the West can sustain an enduring campaign of the kind of violence we witnessed last September. Is there a better example of globalization and interdependence than the Al Qaeda network, which on every continent pursues its struggle against the continuation of human civilization? Globalization, it now appears, is a self-limiting and self-defeating process.

Great Britain offers a model case study of the emerging threats on European soil. Today, Britain has around 1.2 million Muslims, roughly two percent of the population—a smaller percentage than France or Germany. The Muslim population, though, is especially significant in certain cities, where heavy concentrations of Pakistanis and Bengalis have created strong Asian enclaves. In addition, London has a very substantial Arab population as a result of its *de facto* role as the cultural and financial capital of the Middle East, which it became following the destruction of Beirut in the 1970's. In more senses than one, London is now Beirut West.

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It is not just conventional piety to note that most British Muslims have no inclination to engage in violence, no secret fantasies of overthrowing the West. In fact, a good number of Muslim leaders labor against the hardcore Islamists. Last year, British Islam received undesirable publicity when a British convert named Richard Reid reportedly tried to blow up a transatlantic airliner, using explosives stashed in his shoe. Media investigations of Reid's background led to London's Brixton mosque, where the accused "shoe-bomber" may have worshipped together with Zacarias Moussaoui, currently facing trial in the United States as the "20th hijacker" in the September 11 attacks. The Brixton mosque is pastored by Abdul Haqq Baker, who appeared regularly on television news following the airliner attack. Despite the grim circumstances, Imam Baker emerged as a powerful advertisement for what is still mainstream Islam. He retains a belief that Islam is a religion of peace that encourages its members to serve God and live according to His Law; when some worshippers from his mosque started dabbling in militant Islamist politics, Baker tipped off the police about their activities. His chief complaint was that British police never paid enough attention to his earnest warnings about terrorist talent scouts preying on mosques like his in search of the young and unstable. In his view, "The recruiting has got out of control." As Imam Baker preaches to his alarmed congregation, "Beware. It's your sons, your teenagers who are being plucked into these extreme groups."

Imam Baker, however, represents only one strand of British Islam. Much more frightening is the notorious mosque in London's Finsbury Park, a favorite destination for Islamic extremists worldwide. The mosque stands in a heavily Muslim quarter called "Little Algeria" and has been frequented by members of international Islamist groups such as Algeria's terrorist GIA, the *Groupe Islamique Armé*. The GIA is a principal component of the Al Qaeda network; indeed, Al Qaeda owes its very existence to a merger between the GIA and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. The man accused of training the pilots who undertook the attacks on September 11 was, in fact, an Algerian resident in Britain.

Among the firebrand preachers at the Finsbury Park mosque is Abu Hamza al-Masri, who once fought with the *mujahedin* in Afghanistan and edited a newsletter for the GIA. Within Britain, he runs an extremist group called Supporters of Shariah (SOS), which has organized military training for young British Muslims. (The training camps normally run in December, to offer distraction from "the obscenity of Christmas.") Some years ago, SOS supporters—including members of Abu Hamza's family—were arrested in Yemen on charges that they had been sent to that country to destroy Western and Christian targets. Abu Hamza condemns the September 11 attacks, but only because he claims they were carried out by the Israeli Mossad. Within hours of the attacks, however, graffiti near the mosque proclaimed "New York Taleban Triumph" and "God Bless the Dead Dollar."

Visitors to Finsbury Park have included Ahmed Ressam, a GIA fighter who was arrested on the Canadian border at the end of 1999, *en route* to bomb Los Angeles' LAX airport. Another regular attendee was the French-Algerian Djamel Beghal, who was arrested several weeks before September 11 for plotting a series of European terrorist "spectaculars." One of the most ambitious schemes involved flying a helicopter full of explosives into the U.S. embassy in Paris. Beghal was part of a much-feared clandestine network called the *Takfir-wal-Hijra* ("Anathema and Exile"), which received funding from Osama bin Laden, although bin Laden reputedly found the group too extreme for his taste.

Apart from the Finsbury Park group (though connected with it), Britain also has several other Islamist networks that overtly preach *jihad* and recruit young men to fight in holy wars across the globe—in Bosnia and Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya. (A good number of young European recruits turned up among the Al Qaeda prisoners taken during the U.S. war in Afghanistan). In addition, a network of Islamic "charitable" foundations has proved vital to terrorist fundraising worldwide.

One preacher who has become a familiar demon-figure in the British media is the Islamic judge Sheik Omar Bakri Mohamed, leader of the violently anti-Jewish *Muhajiroun*. He first came to notice in the mid-1990's with a series of public rallies in London, in which he declared his vision for an Islamicized Britain. Major planks in his platform included stoning to death those guilty of homosexuality, adultery, fornication, and bestiality; the prohibition of the Union Jack, Christmas decorations and shop-window mannequins; and the abolition of public mixing with members of the opposite sex. In 1998, he also declared—following the embassy bombings in east Africa—that "United States forces are legitimate targets." The British media understandably depicted him as a deranged crank; unlike most cranks, however, Omar Bakri has close connections to very dedicated and well-armed Islamist organizations. Among other friends worldwide, he remains close to Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, the American-based *mullah* whose mosque was the base of organization for the first World Trade Center attack in 1993.

Another highly visible leader of Islamic fanaticism in the United Kingdom is Abu Qatada, a Palestinian by birth. He is connected to the GIA and has been described as "Bin Laden's ambassador to Europe." A recent Spanish indictment declared him the "spiritual head of the *mujaheddin* in Europe." Allegedly, he was involved in a brutal scheme to attack Western targets in Jordan during the millennium celebrations in December 1999, in what would have been the other half of the planned atrocity at LAX. Abu Qatada also led a prayer group near Baker Street, which included well-known spiritual seeker Zacarias Moussaoui.

The Islamists have been admirably frank about what they want. Particularly in recent months, journalists have regularly excavated these corners of an English field that is forever Pakistan, and they have had no difficulty in persuading Islamists to discuss their deranged vision of the future. In the *Washington Post*, for instance, Sharon Waxman interviewed one young "British" activist who declared that

> Islam is fundamentally opposed to democracy. Democracy is law by the people, of the people, for the people. No. We want the law by Allah, for the people. It's man-made law versus divine law. You can't have both. . . . The objective of a caliphate is to make Islam dominate the world. The filth of capitalism dominates the world and should be eradicated.

Looking at this band of bizarre extremists, we might be tempted to ask how their home nations have had the nerve to dump their subversives on British shores, but that question would be grossly unfair to the Middle Eastern states. Over the

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years, Britain and other European nations have followed a somewhat unusual principle of law enforcement that can be described as "You lock them up; we let them in." Abu Qatada has twice been convicted in Jordan on terrorist charges, and many of these new British immigrants stand high on the most wanted lists of countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and the Persian Gulf states. Yemen has a long-standing request to extradite Abu Hamza on charges of plotting terrorism there, though nobody believes that the London government will ever respond. Britain is blessed by the presence of Omar Bakri only because he claimed asylum there in the mid-1980's, while in flight from the Saudi Arabian secret police. One Muslim thug wanted in the attempted assassination of a former Egyptian prime minister lived freely in Britain for several years, despite repeated Egyptian demands to have him delivered for trial. In every case, the suspects are allowed to stay in Britain because they allege that their home countries are persecuting them on religious or political grounds: They are noble dissidents, potential prisoners of conscience.

British toleration of the GIA is particularly strange, since these activists are wanted not only by Arab states but by other European police forces. Most of the GIA activists who roam freely throughout Britain are wanted in Algeria, where the security forces would dearly like to hold some quite intense conversations with them (probably involving electrodes). The French are especially angry over the sanctuary granted to GIA fighters, since the GIA was involved in bombings in Paris in the early 1990's. One proposed attack involved a scheme to crash an airliner into the Eiffel Tower, apparently a first draft of the plan that ultimately bore fruit on September 11. Yet the British remain adamant. One GIA organizer, Abou Faref, lived in Britain for six years while the French tried to extradite him for his alleged role in these bombings. The British seem determined to follow quite literally Voltaire's boast about "defending to the death" opinions with which they disagree. Unfortunately, a great many innocent civilians could be forced to meet quite literal deaths in order to maintain the principle of political asylum and the defense of dissidence.

It is tempting to dismiss characters like Omar Bakri as fringe lunatics who can pose little real harm either to the United Kingdom or to the wider West, but such complacency would be misguided. After all, mounting a serious terrorist campaign takes far fewer people than the general public commonly assumes. Through its 30-year campaign against the British government, the provisional IRA never had more than 500 or so actual fighters at any given time; this hard core of shooters and bombers was supported by perhaps ten times that number of active sympathizers. The Basque ETA has carried on its prolonged war with a military core of around a hundred—again, with a penumbra perhaps ten times as large; and the German Red Army Fraction relied on only 20 to 30 actual paramilitary fighters.

Now look at the British Muslim population. Assume, for the sake of argument, that ten percent of adult male Muslims are regularly hearing incitements to *jihad*, and ten percent of that audience might, in some circumstances, be driven to act upon those ideas. Both figures are fairly conservative given the intense recruiting activity undertaken by Islamist clerics in British prisons and the network of several hundred Taliban-style fundamentalist schools operating in British cities. This would mean that, conceivably, Britain has a core of at least 3,000 or 4,000 potential *jihad* fighters, more than enough to levy a devastating guerrilla war against British society. And unlike ETA or the IRA, the British *mujahedin* would be driven by an ideology that extolled suicide attacks.

When assessing this threat, we might recall the obscure name of Mohammed Bilal, a 24-year-old Birmingham-born man who, in 2000, drove a truckload of explosives into a barracks in the Indian province of Kashmir as part of the Islamist effort to take over that contested region. Reportedly, he had been dispatched by the British-based al-Muhajiroun. In the circumstances of the time, he had to travel halfway across the world to meet his martyrdom, but it is not too difficult to conceive of circumstances in which he could have met his goal much closer to home—perhaps in Birmingham itself. Just this past January, a spokesman for al-Muhajiroun boasted of the number of British Muslims, trained in Afghanistan, who would be forced to return home after the fall of the Taliban. He declared that "If they do return, I do believe they will take military action within Britain [against] British military and government institutions, as well as British military and government individuals."

Very probably, any such guerrilla war would employ much more lethal tactics than have been witnessed hitherto. While the events of last September inevitably make us think of aerial terrorist attacks, it is much more likely that the next phase will involve either the familiar truck bombs or—a much more frightening concept—shipborne attacks. The Allied scientists who designed the atom bomb originally thought of delivering it by these means, and we can see some awful historical precedents arising from accidental explosions aboard ships. Think, for instance, of the annihilation of the Canadian port of Halifax when an ammunition ship exploded in the harbor in 1917. London is dreadfully vulnerable to such an attack, since virtually all of Britain's leading political and military targets are perilously close to the Thames. The same point applies to many other European (and, of course, American) cities. Why should someone try smuggling explosives through airport security when a single ship can carry a thousand tons of lethal chemicals right into the heart of a great port?

To say that the British are failing to respond adequately to these threats would be a charitable understatement. After September 11, the chief official act of Parliament was to pass seemingly draconian anti-terror legislation, which resulted in a few random detentions of the usual suspects. The British government was much less alarmed by the Islamist challenge than by the danger of an anti-Muslim backlash. One of the rare occasions that a British minister showed genuine anger in his pronouncements was when a Home Office *apparatchik* swore to root out "the cancer of Islamophobia" from British society. Despite all the warnings, all the evidence of clear-and-present danger, the authorities have never once shown the slightest recognition of the need to detain or deport those who have actively incited terrorist violence on British soil or to disrupt the elaborate training and financial networks developed by the subversives. If Britain ever does find itself under Islamist attack, confronting a danger worse than that of 1940, then the only fit verdict that should be rendered upon that nation would be one of suicide—perhaps with the qualification of "while operating under a disturbed mind."

This behavior in a foreign nation facing such a threat is quite inconceivable—or would be, if every word of this critique did not apply with equal force to our own United States of America.

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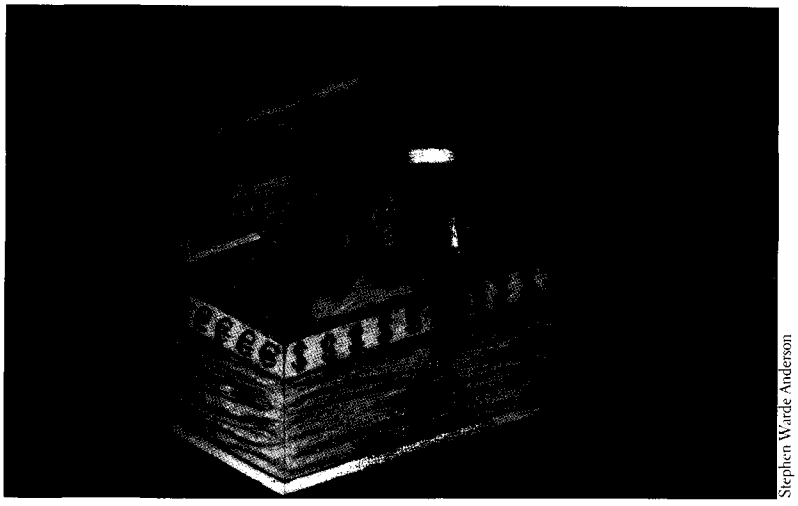
Pandora's Box

Terrorism and Globalization

by Morgan Norval



Stephen Warde Anderson

Globalization is remaking the world in ways that will profoundly affect how people do business, govern themselves, and even make war. We may debate what the driving force behind globalization is—capitalism or technology, for example—but there is no doubt that capital goods, services, people, and ideas cross borders with increasing speed, frequency, and ease. Actions in one country have consequences and significance in distant places. The world, in the minds of the globalizers, is becoming "one place" with global communications and media, supranational institutions, integrated markets, and a financial system that trades 24 hours a day. Trade barriers have fallen, and technological advances have enabled the expansion of transnational corporations and financial networks that seek to take advantage of regions with low production costs and new markets in an increasingly competitive environment.

The computer is the gilded icon driving the process of globalization. In addition to revolutionizing everyday life, the computer has become a tool of war in international terrorism. Revolutionaries, counterrevolutionaries, extremist groups, separatist movements, and cults and their critics all use the internet for their purposes. The explosion in new technology has significantly abetted the growth and proliferation of international crime and terrorism. Thanks to globalization, these groups, if they desire to go international, now have the tools they need. Access to modern communications and weapons technologies have provided criminals, warlords, and terrorists with considerable political and economic leverage in cyberspace.

Globalization is creating a bifurcated world order that is broadly divided between those countries that are largely integrated into the global economy and those countries that either are being left behind or that challenge and even reject the norms of the globalizers. (Militant Islamic states are among the more violent opponents.) All is not well in the "global community."

Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have become violent clashes between local security forces and a disparate array of groups united only by their opposition to globalization. It is the height of irony that both IMF protesters and militant Islam make skillful use of the technological tools that further globalization.

Advances in communication technology, so critical to globalization, have increased the awareness of ethnic groups living within the same territory. This awareness is a two-edged sword: Not only does one become more aware of those who share the same cultural and ethnic identity, but he becomes more aware of alien ethnic groups. The result is the crumbling of many of the multicultural countries of the world, as separatist movements arise in such diverse countries as Spain, Thailand, Burma, and even Ethiopia. This illustrates a looming danger for the United States, as our homegrown global elites, over the opposition of most Americans, establish lax immigration laws and policies that encourage the transformation of America into an unstable and fragmented multicultural collective. This is dangerous, because multicultural societies squander creative energies and human capital on social struggles aimed at enhancing group power at the expense of the nation. When cultural confrontation pits alternative value systems against one another, the country declines—no matter what the relative merit of the contending values.

The continuous weakening or even disappearance of multiethnic countries has unleashed a resurgence of ancient tribal and cultural affinities. People are deciding that it is better to fight and die in the name of the tribe than in the name of a discredited, disappearing, and often artificially contrived national identity. It is safer to be among your kith and kin as a majority in a small enclave than to be a minority in a political entity

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Morgan Norval writes from Alexandria, Virginia.

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ruled by your enemy.

During the next half-century, the world's population is expected to double. While proponents of globalization believe that new technological advances and expanding markets will help nations cope with this population explosion, they overlook a key fact: Ninety-five percent of that increase will be in the poorest regions of the world—in Africa, for example, where what passes for government often fails even to function.

This population explosion will coincide with, and add to, a great migration of peoples. The migration will be both within existing borders, as rural dwellers move into the cities, and across borders, as people flee strife, famine, resource depletion, and disease to seek a better life elsewhere. Some portion of these migrants will be criminals, thugs, and terrorists who will find succor within the teeming, anonymous masses of their urban environment.

Globalization is not only reshaping the world's economy; it is shaping international politics and security affairs. Globalization has muddied the waters for combating and trying to control terrorism. Terrorism's diffuse and underdefined structures make it difficult to expose and eradicate. Moreover, obscure cliques of religious fanatics, with no clear ideological objectives, have introduced a far more dangerous component into terrorism: a desire to use violence against the United States—the chief proponent of globalization—and its citizens.

The decentralized structure of terrorist networks—Al Qaeda is composed of small cells in 60 countries spread across the globe—makes it extremely difficult to deal these networks one fatal blow. They have demonstrated great skill in using globalization and its associated technologies for their sinister purposes.

People displaced by globalization are, thanks to globalization's technologies, increasingly associating with their counterparts throughout the world, networking and working on shared problems, and evolving or sustaining institutions that can further their goals. The Armenians, Palestinians, Irish, Jews, Tamils, Kurds, and Sikhs—to name just a few—all get financial and political support from their diaspora. They have developed a number of ways of reinforcing their shared symbols and cultural ties, maintaining clear lines of communication, distributing financial and material assistance to their beleaguered colleagues, and otherwise strengthening their bonds across international borders. Globalization and the jet plane have made it possible for people, ideas, money, goods, and services to pass through, avoid, or otherwise ignore the control of states with relative impunity.

Information technologies help geographically dispersed terrorists plot and conduct acts of terror anywhere on the globe. Using the internet for communication can speed mobilization and dialogue between the plotters, enhancing the terrorists' flexibility, since tactics can be adjusted more frequently. Individuals with a common agenda and goals can form subgroups, meet at a target location, conduct the terrorist operation, and then readily end their relationship and redisperse back into their respective diaspora.

In addition to this operational flexibility, terrorist groups and their networks can protect their vital communications through readily available commercial technology, such as encryption programs. Commercial encryption programs are becoming so sophisticated that coded e-mails may soon be extremely difficult to crack. Terrorists can also use steganography—a method of hiding secret data in other data, such as embedding a secret message within a picture file. They can encrypt cell-phone transmissions, steal cell-phone numbers and program them into a single phone, or use prepaid cell-phone cards purchased anonymously to keep their communications secure.

Governments around the world are increasingly being reshaped by powerful, restless individuals and groups who know they are off the radar of the global elites. They are willing to question authority and are capable of working and using the fast-paced events of globalization to their advantage. They are abandoning unquestioned and unthinking obedience to their rulers and are demanding that those rulers fulfill their demands—or else. Osama bin Laden is a prime example. He questioned both the policies of his Saudi rulers and the willingness of "mainstream" Islam to cozy up to the United States. Forced into exile, ultimately in caves in Afghanistan—the epitome of remoteness—and utilizing the tools of globalization, he was able to plan, organize, and carry out the audacious terror attacks on the United States. Unfortunately, there are more bin Ladens capable of causing mischief by employing the forces of globalization and diaspora to attack their opponents from within.

> Our war against terrorism will create a dozen new enemies for each one we destroy.

Thanks to modern technology, small groups, tribes, Asian triads, Islamic fundamentalists, gangsters, militias, and even solitary individuals have gained increasing military effectiveness. They will exercise more real power in this century than they have since the 17th century. What will be the result? Wars will be fought more and more by hydra-headed gangs of terrorists, drug warlords, and revolutionaries too decentralized, spread out, and unpredictable to be targeted by Cruise missiles, stealth bombers, or tanks and artillery—the arsenal of our very technologically dependent military stockpile.

At no time in history have men been able to move as quickly, as cheaply, and as often as they can in today's globalized world. That mobility, coupled with the lack of scruples of the terrorists, Islamic fanatics, ethnic cleansers, drug lords, and other players in the murky world of nonstate violence, provides our current and future enemies a great deal of tactical flexibility. Thanks to globalization, aggressive nonstate groups, wielding high-tech equipment, have a tremendous time advantage over slow, hulking states, paralyzed by administrative inertia and legalistic nitpicking. Not only will these groups thrive in failed states—globalization's losers—but, in many instances, they will be instrumental in causing the crumbling of other states.

The microchip is neutralizing the enormously expensive modern military machines of today, making total war less profitable and, therefore, less likely. Smart shoulder-held missiles, such as the Stinger surface-to-air missile, effectively neutralized much of the advantage that large and wealthy states formerly enjoyed. The presence of old Soviet surface-to-air missiles in the hands of Serbian forces in Kosovo forced the NATO air campaign to bomb at levels above 15,000 feet, eliminating close

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air support. The fear of similar weapons affected our recent campaign in Afghanistan, although mistaken tactics by the Taliban played to the strengths of our airpower and reduced the necessity for extensive close air support. Given the technological weapons available—portable missiles, faxes, cell phones, the internet—terrorists are well positioned to continue to take advantage of the forces of globalization. Even compact modern assault rifles can provide a handful of individuals with the equivalent firepower of an entire regiment in Napoleon's army.

Israel, a willing beneficiary of globalization, serves as a clear example of the difficulty in countering independent terrorist groups. Israel has superior military assets, including defense forces and intelligence services that are among the best in the world, policymakers and a public who are willing to take risks and to accept casualties, and widespread support for the military that does not flag even if mistakes are made. Yet the country cannot prevent or deter terrorist attacks, or even rocket assaults from southern Lebanon. Israel's experience shows that, at best, governments can only manage the problem of terrorism.

Thanks to globalization, our enemies are everywhere but nowhere—known to many but elusive to all—obviously dangerous but mostly invisible, like "shadowy strangers" among us that hide their true faces. And our war against them will create a dozen new enemies for each one we destroy. Every action we take, no matter how justifiable, will give the mass murderers of our era the excuse they want to polarize the masses and to recruit more fighters. They will not hesitate to take advantage of globalization, which they hate, in order to aid their efforts. One of three possible scenarios may result. The most utopian is that globalization will spread democracy and free markets throughout the world, creating a stable new world order. It is also possible that the world will remain much as it is today: bifurcated, beset by strife and economic hardship: or, perhaps, the collapse of the emerging global system will be brought about by widespread economic turmoil, caused by the interaction of globalization and the forces of disorder, including terrorism.

The joker in the deck is resurgent mainstream Islam. Across the Muslim world, in nations with poor economies and burgeoning populations, globalization is feared and distrusted, and Islamic fanatics have a growing pool of believers who are becoming more susceptible to their message. This resurgence is a product of modernity—including globalization—and of Muslims' attempts to deal with it by rejecting Western culture and influence and recommitting themselves to Islam. This will affect our war on terrorism, because the primary obstacle to success in this war is a cultural one. To a great extent, the war on terrorism is a clash of civilizations, as Islam is fundamentally anti-Western; thus, the prospects for success are limited. Unless we recognize that we are engaged in the revival of the centuries-old clash between Islam and the Christian West and act accordingly, we face a future where the best we can hope for is to keep terrorist acts to a manageable level. If Islam does not self-destruct, it will remain a bitter foe of the West and the forces of globalization, and it will hold to its age-old worldview in which it is at war with the non-Muslim world (*Dar al' Harb*). The use of terrorism will be an attractive option in the struggle to lash out at Islam's enemies while attempting to impose the Allah-mandated *Dar al' Islam* (the House of Islam) on the rest of the non-Muslim world.

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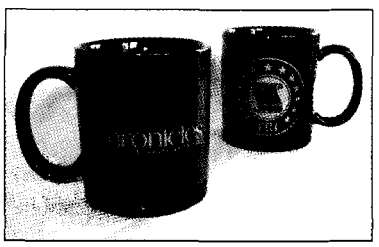

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The Tarantulas

by Curtis Cate

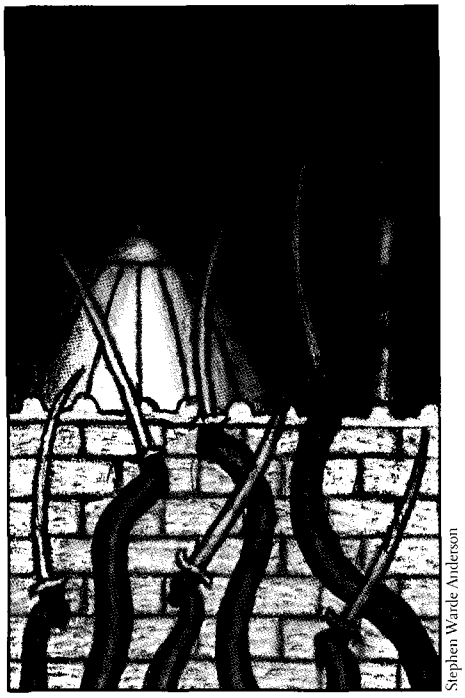
"'That precisely for us is justice, that the world be filled with the tempests of our revenge'—so speak they to each other."

—Friedrich Nietzsche

In the Name of Osama Bin Laden
by Roland Jacquard
Durham: Duke University Press;
312 pp., $54.95

Dollars for Terror:
The United States and Islam
by Richard Labévière
New York: Algora Publications;
408 pp., $24.95

Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia
by Ahmed Rashid
New Haven: Yale University Press;
288 pp., $29.95



Stephen Warde Anderson

Ortega y Gasset once judiciously observed that "Man reaches truth with hands bloodied from the strangling of a hundred platitudes." One such commonplace is the popular belief that virtually all of the terrorist assaults that have been mounted in recent years against U.S. embassies and servicemen abroad have been the diabolical work of a single network, which is also responsible for the massive destruction of last September 11: the Al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden. This simplistic notion obscures a fundamental feature of what has become a planetary phenomenon: the fact that the *jihad* now being waged by Muslim extremists against America in particular and the West in general is also, in effect, an ideological civil war in the very heart of Islam—indeed, inside the very holiest of its holy books—with regard to the "correct" interpretation of the "Glorious Koran." Let us now see if, with the help of three books written by "experts" who have spent years probing the mysteries of what the French aptly call a *nébuleuse*, we can begin to penetrate more deeply the galactic mists and periodic explosions of this phenomenon.

The first volume is *Au nom d'Oussama Ben Laden* (*In the Name of Osama Bin Laden*), which, because of its hot-off-the-griddle timeliness, created a sensation at the Frankfurt Book Fair last October, enabling the small Paris publisher, Jean Picollec, to sell foreign rights to a dozen non-French publishers, including Duke University in South Carolina. The author, Roland Jacquard, has for years been writing books and articles about terrorism and terrorists, including one on the Venezuelan terrorist "Carlos," who, for a time in the 1970's, was the "most wanted" terrorist in the world. The expertise acquired from years of investigations into the increasingly planetary underworld of Terror—accomplished, it is clear, with the aid and connivance of French and other secret intelligence agencies—has made Jacquard a recognized "authority" who is often consulted on such matters by the United Nations Security Council in New York City and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

The inherent weakness of any book largely based on information provided by secret intelligence agents of one kind or another is that the sources cannot be publicly named. But this is not to say that the factual information thus derived is valueless. Roland Jacquard has done his best to overcome the unavoidable flaw in books of this kind by adding footnotes at the end of each chapter and providing the reader with a useful index filled with Arabic and other names. His book even contains facsimile reproductions of Islamic *pronunciamentos* and bellicose communiqués, presented in the original Arabic script.

It is always an uncharitable error to criticize an author for not having written the kind of book he *should* have written. Roland Jacquard makes no claim to being a psychologist, whether Freudian or otherwise, and his book, though it contains the basic facts about the upbringing of the 25th son of a wealthy Saudi Arabian entrepreneur of Yemenite origin, makes no attempt to explain why Osama bin Laden should have suddenly become not merely a maverick but an intransigent critic of the Saudi royal family, with

Curtis Cate is the author of biographies of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, George Sand, and André Malraux. He began his career in journalism as a freelance writer for the Christian Science Monitor *and the Middle East correspondent of* Visíon *magazine.*

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many of whose members—in particular, Prince Turki al Faisal (in the 1980's and 1990's the powerful head of the kingdom's Intelligence Service)—he was once on very friendly terms. Jacquard has not written a biography of the "most wanted" terrorist in the world. His aim is more modest; as the title of his book suggests, he has attempted to chronicle the gradual development of an extraordinary conspiratorial network, stretched like a spider's web all the way from Indonesia and the Philippines to Florida and Toronto.

Not the least surprising feature of this planetary plotter is his almost total lack of any definite revolutionary philosophy comparable to the neo-Marxist ideologies that inspired men like Che Guevara or Carlos. This doubtless explains something that otherwise would be inexplicable: the close friendship established by this sophisticated, well-educated product of Saudi Arabia's financial aristocracy with Maulavi Mohammed Omar, an almost totally uneducated peasant from the region of Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan who, thanks to "divine" visions calling him to become a new prophet of Allah and a gift for fire-and-brimstone preaching, managed to make himself not only a "Mullah" but also (with bin Laden's support) the "Commander of the Faithful" whom all Afghans were supposed to revere as a model of Koranic probity for the rest of the Muslim world.

The essential cementing factor in this extraordinary friendship was, of course, the sacred *jihad* fought against the invading Soviet forces in the early 1980's, in which Osama bin Laden distinguished himself first as a frontline fighter and then as one of the *mujahedin*'s most active and enterprising quartermasters (for cash as well as weapons in abundance), while Mullah Omar's heroism cost him an eye.

Although the parallel might be misleading, it can probably be said that the sense of virile camaraderie developed among thousands of Arabic and other Muslim volunteers resembled that of the tens of thousands of foreign volunteers who, with the support of communist movements in Europe, went to fight in Spain on behalf of the beleaguered Republic when the civil war broke out in the summer of 1936. The veteran survivors of that epic conflict who managed to escape across the Pyrenees into southwestern France when Franco finished off the moribund Republic in February 1939 soon found a new outlet for their martial energies in combating Hitler's invading divisions. In Afghanistan, the foreign volunteers, far from being defeated, emerged victorious. And the heady feeling induced by their successful humbling of the supposedly invincible Soviet colossus was so inebriating that it persuaded many of them that it was the will of Allah, no less than Kalashnikovs and U.S.-manufactured "Stinger" anti-helicopter missiles, that had made this stunning triumph possible.

The chief merit of Jacquard's book is to provide the reader with a fairly detailed account of the manner in which the Islamic *esprit de corps* forged in the guerrilla warfare of Afghanistan was cleverly exploited by Osama bin Laden to form "combat groups" in many other countries—notably, in the Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. This feeling of wartime *camaraderie* was not initially anti-Saudi. Indeed, as Jacquard points out, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in December 1990, Osama bin Laden volunteered to join the anti-Iraqi coalition at the head of his "Arabic Legion" in order to defend the territorial sanctity of his Saudi Arabian homeland. If the Saudi commanders could have foreseen the embarrassing nuisance bin Laden was destined to become, they could have arranged to put this "Islamic warrior" to the cruel test by having him exposed to the frontline fire of Saddam Hussein's armored divisions. But realizing, like Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf and the Allied High Command, that this motley host of "Afghan veterans" with their bazookas and Kalashnikovs would be ideal cannon-fodder for Iraqi tanks, they politely declined Osama bin Laden's offer.

The far-reaching consequence of this humiliating rebuff is now fairly well-known history. Outraged to find the Arabian heartland abominably "defiled" by the stationing on Saudi soil of "protective" U.S. troops, Osama bin Laden became increasingly outspoken in his criticisms of the Saudi princes whom he, his father, and his many brothers had once befriended, and whose lax and "profligate" ways he now condemned from his new "headquarters," a luxurious residence in a fashionable suburb of Khartoum. Even so, the rupture was gradual rather than abrupt. For, as Jacquard writes, when, in May 1996, the axe finally fell, his Saudi citizenship was officially revoked, and the Sudanese authorities were asked to have him extradited, it was into a hired Hercules C-130 cargo carrier—not exactly an inconspicuous aircraft—that Osama bin Laden was able to bundle his four wives, a score or more of children, and no fewer than 150 assistants and retainers for an untroubled trip to Jallalabad in eastern Afghanistan.

Details like this are what make Roland Jacquard's book worth reading. Nothing in Middle Eastern politics is simple; this is particularly true of the complex and enigmatic life of Osama bin Laden, who, in "going underground" and adopting a strategy of terror against the "Great Satan," managed to inculcate in his subordinates a most un-Arabic discipline and technical efficiency, based on meticulous long-term planning and patient watchfulness. A typical example was the perfectly executed seaborne assault on the U.S.S. *Cole*, carried out with clockwork precision by two kamikaze terrorists on a high-speed inflatable dingy loaded with dynamite, which crashed into the hull and killed more than 20 U.S. sailors at a moment when the vessel, in the Yemenite port of Aden, was in its most vulnerable condition.

I can also recommend Richard Labévière's *Les dollars de la terreur* (*Dollars for Terror*) as worthwhile reading for anyone wishing to understand what has been happening in the nebulous world of "international terrorism"—let us have the courage to call it, less euphemistically, Islamic terrorism. More prophetic than Jacquard's book, its implications regarding the future are even more disturbing. Yet, when it was presented by Bernard Grasset, a prominent Paris publisher, at the Frankfurt Book Fair of October 1999, it was brushed aside as "fanciful" and unworthy of serious attention by most U.S. publishers—the sole exception being a small New York house named Algora, which later published the English-language version.

A reporter for *Télévision suisse romande*, Labévière seems to have been awakened from his "dogmatic slumbers" by the mysterious murder, in November 1995, of a diplomat serving with the permanent Egyptian mission to the United Nations in Geneva: Alaa el-Din Nazmi, who was gunned down while parking his BMW sedan in the underground garage of his apartment building. The Swiss police and the Helvetian authorities were at first reluctant to admit that this might have been a political assassination, even

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though, five months before, an attempt had been made on the life of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarrak, during an official visit to the Ethiopian capital of Addis-Ababa on June 26. Immediately thereafter, the Egyptian authorities had accused Denmark and Switzerland of sheltering terrorists, and Switzerland in particular of offering asylum to an Egyptian surgeon named Ayman al-Zawahiri, the military chief of an armed organization calling itself Jihad.

Two days after the murder in Geneva, an organization calling itself the Gama'a [Group] of International Justice claimed that it had had the Egyptian diplomat executed according to the Law of Talion by the "battalion of the martyr Abdallah Azam," an enterprising Lebanese who had preceded Osama bin Laden as the chief recruiter of Arabic and other volunteers wishing to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan before his mysterious death in 1989. Six days later (November 19), a delivery van crammed with explosives and driven by a kamikaze driver rammed through the gateway of the Egyptian mission in Islamabad, detonating a huge explosion in which 15 people were killed. The same Gama'a of International Justice claimed the crime was the work of the "Brigade of the martyr, Khaled Islambouli"—one of the authors of Anwar al-Sadat's assassination in 1981.

The Swiss police, with Richard Labévière now also in hot pursuit of the truth, soon discovered that Alaa el-Din Nazmi had been assigned the task of tracking down between 200 and 500 million dollars in funds owned by the Ikhwan muslimum (the "Muslim Brotherhood") and banked in Lugano. Several exiled members of the Muslim Brotherhood, highly suspect in Egypt because of its implication in Anwar al-Sadat's assassination, were now trying to "buy their way back" to their homeland by organizing the "repatriation" of the Brotherhood's substantial funds. Indeed, not long before Nazmi's murder, Talaat Fuad Qassem, one of the creators of the Gama'a islamiya had been arrested by the Bosnian police after making a brief visit to Geneva to make sure that not a penny of the Muslim Brotherhood's secret funds left Switzerland. The Bosnian authorities had officially "expelled" Talaat Fuad Qassem (incidentally, an "Afghan veteran," like so many others) as an "undesirable," but his friends had soon discovered that he had been quietly dispatched to Egypt and ruthlessly tortured by the police there. The tit-for-tat riposte for this "outrage" was the murder of Nazmi.

These details are merely a sample of what this fact-crammed book contains. The great merit of the volume, which complements that of Roland Jacquard, is the light the author sheds on an organization that, in terms of duration and ideological significance, is far older than Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and, in the long run, will likely prove to be even more unsettling and dangerous for an all-too-precarious *status quo*—in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Richard Labévière's main thesis—if one can use the singular for such a complex, intertwined, and polymorphous subject—is that Saudi Arabia or, at least, certain affluent Saudi Arabians have been using the kingdom's "petrodollars" to finance and promote the Muslim Brotherhood's international activities, the ultimate aim being nothing less than the extension of the Brotherhood's control over all Islamic institutions in Europe.

What makes this ambitious enterprise so insidious is the camouflaged nature of the Brotherhood's operations. On the one hand, like the Irish Sinn Fein, it operates "legitimately," subtly circumventing the Koran's explicit condemnation of the *ribâ*, or usury, through "donations" and "charitable" enterprises; on the other hand, like the Irish Republican Army, it maintains and cultivates a martial activism that relies heavily on the physical elimination of Muslim leaders who are opposed to its fundamental aim: the imposition throughout the Islamic world of *sharia*, in which the secular power of each state is, in effect, subordinated to its theocratic authorities (i.e., the mullahs, the *ulema*, etc.).

The story is so complex that I can only leap-frog over many pertinent facts to dwell on essentials. Founded in April 1929 by a 22-year-old Egyptian schoolteacher named Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood was designed to combat the secularist tendencies that, with the help of Western "reformers" (such as those who helped found the Baath movements in Syria and Iraq) were undermining the supremacy of Islam throughout the Middle East. These "pernicious" secular influences were anathema to al-Banna, who specifically condemned the separation of church and state, advocated a reestablishment of the caliphate, wanted political parties to be dissolved as agents of division in the Muslim world, and summed up his philosophy in these lapidary words: "Islam is the doctrine, the cult of the divinity, the nation, religion, spirituality, the Koran and the sword."

The addition of the "sword" was by no means an empty formula. Labévière claims that the Muslim Brotherhood's militant ideology was much influenced by European fascism. Be that as it may, from 1942 on, the Brotherhood began organizing a secret military branch, composed of "activists" prepared to eliminate secular "enemies" at the very highest level. Its first major victim was Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Maher, who was shot to death during a parliamentary session in February 1945 after his government had declared war on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In January 1946, another prime minister, Osman Pasha, was assassinated for his excessively pro-British views, and his murder was soon followed by that of Egyptian police chief Selim Zaki Pasha. When, two years later, King Farouk officially dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood and had 4,000 of its members arrested, the Brotherhood riposted by ordering the assassination of another prime minister, Nokrashy Pasha.

The history of Egypt, ever since King Farouk's forced abdication in 1952, has been the tortuous chronicle of more or less "secular" leaders—officers like Mohammed Neguib, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar al-Sadat, and now Hosni Mubarrak—seeking to neutralize the vast influence of the Muslim Brotherhood either by mass arrests and imprisonments or by behind-the-scenes negotiations with exiled members, aimed at tempering their dangerous wrath. Among the astounding facts that Labévière has uncovered is that, during the 1980's and 1990's—partly as a result of the anti-Soviet *jihad* in Afghanistan in which, along with Pakistan's ISI and Osama bin Laden, it was closely involved—the Muslim Brotherhood was secretly financed by Saudi businessmen with the connivance of the kingdom's forceful intelligence chief, Prince Turki al Feysal. Moreover, there have been times—beginning under John Foster Dulles—when CIA agents, bent on countering the pro-Soviet inclinations of certain Egyptian governments (notably that of Nasser), have actually encouraged the Muslim Brotherhood's activities.

Perhaps the most fascinating chapter in Labévière's book is the one devoted to

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the bloody Luxor massacre of November 1997. This was, in a quite literal sense, a foretaste of what was to be perpetrated in the New York and Pentagon bombardments of September 11, 2001. This time, the target was not a military installation—like the U.S. Marines' barracks in Beirut, blown up by a kamikaze truck driver in 1982, or the similar assault made in 1994 on a U.S. troop encampment in Saudi Arabia. It was not aimed at any U.S. building, as with the closely synchronized bomb blasts that, in August 1998, heavily damaged our embassies in Khartoum and Dar-es-Salaam. Nor was the intended victim a prominent Egyptian leader, like Anwar al-Sadat who was assassinated by a commando force of Islamic fanatics inspired, if not actually masterminded, by the Muslim Brotherhood. No, the targets this time were innocent civilians, no less than 56 foreign tourists (35 of them "neutral" Swiss citizens untainted by any trace of Zionist sympathies) mercilessly gunned down while visiting the temple of Queen Hatsheput by an Islamic commando force composed of six fanatics who, to facilitate their lethal task, had donned the black uniforms of the Egyptian police.

Because the six gunmen later shot themselves after being trapped in a nearby cave, the exact circumstances of this mass murder are still shrouded in mystery. Realizing the devastating blow this bloody incident could deal to the prestige of the country's tourist industry—one of Egypt's main sources of foreign earnings—neither the government nor the police in Cairo were particularly generous in their revelations. But, according to Labévière, the Luxor massacre was carried out by members of the Gama'a islamiya, whose founder was none other than the Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who had made a botched attempt to blow up the World Trade Center in February 1993. The Luxor massacre, furthermore, was specially timed to coincide with the opening of the trial of Mustapha Hamza, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (as well as of its offshoot, the Gama'a islamiya), who had vainly tried to assassinate President Hosni Mubarrak in Addis-Ababa after having, like so many other "veterans," made the martial pilgrimage to Peshawar and Afghanistan.

The subsequent investigation led Egyptian police inspectors and intelligence agents to London, which had become a haven for Egyptian "refugees from oppression." One of these was the now-famous Egyptian ex-surgeon, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the founder (after a quarrel with the blind Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman) of an even more dangerously militant terrorist organization calling itself, explicitly, the (Egyptian) Jihad. Less than one year later, this dedicated anti-Westerner merged his group of militant fanatics with those of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network.

It is probably true to say that this alliance gave the Saudi Arabian maverick a technical expertise and "scientific" precision in the planning of new terrorist attacks he had previously lacked. Certain keen observers of the Middle Eastern scene—like Patrick Seale, a fluent Arabic speaker who for years served as an influential journalist with the London *Observer*—have been struck by the fact that almost all of the pilots who actually steered the Boeing jetliners into their sky-scraping (World Trade Center) or low-lying (Pentagon) targets were of Egyptian origin. To Saudi Arabs and other Islamic "tough guys" was left the task of knifing and subduing each airliner's staff. To state the matter in its stark simplicity: The liquidation of the Al Qaeda network does not mean that the latest Muslim version of "Terrorism as a Way of Life" has been dealt a mortal blow. Two of the hydra's heads have been lopped off, but others are certain to replace them.

Many American admirers of the state of Israel naively regret that Egypt should be an autocratic army-ruled state, rather than the kind of genuine parliamentary democracy that Israel unquestionably is. But this is wishful thinking, geopolitical naiveté of the most deceptive kind. If President Hosni Mubarak were to agree tomorrow on absolutely free elections, the inevitable result would be a repetition of the catastrophic outcome of the free elections that the government in Algeria staged several years ago, which resulted in the stunning triumph of the FIS—Front Islamique du Salut—whose ultramontane recipe for national "starvation" was nothing less than the imposition of the theocratic supremacy of *sharia* (Islamic law). To avert this catastrophe, the Algerian authorities—which is to say, its military chiefs—stepped in and forcibly annulled the "shocking" results of those elections.

It is hardly necessary to add that, were a catastrophe of this kind to occur in Egypt, the consequence would be infinitely more upsetting to the fragile peace of our turbulent planet. The resultant *jihad* would inevitably bring on the "clash of civilizations" that Samuel Huntington ominously foresaw as likely to occur, more than eight years ago. This is why, simply as a *pis aller*, successive U.S. administrations have agreed not only to finance the state of Israel, but also to keep Egypt and its 65 million restless malcontents from "going overboard" into turbulent Islamic whirlpools, by generously offering each country financial assistance: between two and three billion dollars *per annum*.

At this point I owe my readers, and not least Ahmed Rashid, an apology for having devoted so much time to the works of Roland Jacquard and Richard Labévière, and so little to Rashid's delightfully informative book, *Taliban*. From the strictly literary point of view, this highly personal narrative of an experienced Pakistani journalist's observations and adventures in Afghanistan is of vastly superior quality. It has been quite rightly praised by book reviewers in the United States, and full credit should be given to the Yale University Press for having dared to flout academic prejudices by publishing a book written by a journalist. No one seriously wishing to understand what has been happening over the past 20 years in Afghanistan can afford not to read this book.

And not one of them should be disappointed. Among its many delights are invaluable vignettes of the politicians and warlords who have made the recent history of this mountainous wonderland so confused and turbulent, beginning with a fascinating close-up of that would-be Islamic prophet and self-appointed scourge of sinfulness and non-Muslim levity, the half-blind Amir Mohammed Omar, and including a devastating portrait of Afghanistan's turncoat Uzbek commander, the *bon vivant* Gen. Rashid Dostum. Together, they represent the two opposite poles of the multicolored politico-religious spectrum of this strange Aryan land, whose mysterious Afghan name is neither of Arabic nor of Muslim origin but—certain scholars claim—was derived by a process of consonantal distortion from the Greek *epigoni*: the descendants of the "heroic" officers and soldiers whom Alexander the Great had left behind after briefly marrying a Bactrian princess—three centuries before the birth of Christ.

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Back to Althusius

by Thomas Fleming

Democracy, the God that Failed: The Economics and Politics of Monarchy, Democracy, and Natural Order
by Hans-Hermann Hoppe
New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers; 304 pp., $44.95

◆

Hans-Hermann Hoppe may be the most brilliant and original classical liberal alive today. Often lumped together with the libertarians, of whom he is justly critical, Hoppe was a student of Jürgen Habermas before becoming a disciple of Murray Rothbard and, through Rothbard, of Ludwig von Mises. Hoppe is probably the most important philosopher produced by the Austrian School. Friedrich Hayek and Mises were primarily economists, and Rothbard, though a jack-of-all-trades and a master of many, did his best work as an economic historian. Of the Austrians, Hoppe is one of the few to have taken political philosophy seriously as a primary occupation, and while his conclusions may sometimes take him well beyond the limits of liberal thought, his basic concepts and approach make him an authentic member of the school. This volume, which is an excellent introduction to Hoppe's work, is one of the very few important books produced by the American right in recent years.

In defending private property from the predatory state, Hoppe is in the mainstream of the liberal tradition, and he owes the concept of time preference, which is at the heart of much of his theoretical work, to Mises and Rothbard. Although the theory of time preference can be elaborate, the essence is quite simple. People can be classified as having either a high or low time preference, depending on their willingness to forgo current gratification for a future reward. Those with a high time preference are more insistent upon more immediate gratification, and vice versa. Edward Banfield applied the concept to class distinctions, pointing out that, on the continuum from lower to working to middle to upper middle, the higher a person's class, the lower his time preference. This helps to explain, for example, why lower-class people want to be paid at the end of the day, while upper-middle-class people reckon their income as an annual salary.

Hoppe's insight—and it is startling in its simplicity—is to apply time-preference theory to regimes and ruling classes. Rulers that somehow own the country or the state, according to the theory, will be willing to forgo the immediate gratification of high taxes (or ruinous wars for the sake of plunder) in order to pass on the commonwealth to their heirs, while rulers with only a short period in power will be tempted to "loot" (one of Hoppe's favorite words) the country through high taxes, corruption, etc. As it turns out, a well-established monarchical dynasty should be the least onerous regime, while a democratic state that imposes term limits on elected officials would inflict the highest taxes. From Hoppe's perspective, members of the U.S. Congress are like Canadian mosquitoes: The summer is so short that the bloodsucking parasites must be ruthless to the point of reckless if they are to thrive. In the course of his career, Hoppe has applied this insight to taxation, spending, debt, and corruption, almost always to good effect.

Opponents of big government would have reason to be grateful to Hoppe if he had merely limited his analysis to questions of time preference. In fact, he has gone further, offering fundamental criticism of the simplistic libertarian/liberal ideology that reduces all human relations to a conflict between individuals and the state. Instead of treating immigration as a human right or a function of the labor market, he correctly regards current immigration policies as a system of "forced immigration" that destroys authentic communities.

Unlike libertarians, Hoppe is fully aware that an excessive emphasis on individual rights leads directly to the state centralization that destroys civilization, and he demonstrates clearly that, in the case of Germany, civilization is richest when it is most decentralized. His ideal is something like the Althusian vision of a decentralized and federal Holy Roman Empire (though it is not clear that he has actually studied Althusius).

Hoppe is willing to take his decentralist politics down to the lowest level and sees clearly that the institution of the family is fundamental both to civilization and to liberty: "Families and households must be recognized," he writes in the conclusion to his chapter "On Cooperation, Tribe, City, State,"

> as the source of civilization. It is essential that heads of families and households reassert their ultimate authority as judge in all internal family affairs. (Households must be declared extraterritorial territory, like foreign embassies.)

Hoppe's frank declaration of family autonomy, while a refreshing change from the stale "family values" rhetoric of social conservatives, is not entirely new. There is a long conservative tradition on this point, which he seems to have ignored.

In fact, historical research is not Hoppe's strong suit. Unlike Murray Rothbard, whose explorations of American history often took him into uncharted territory, Hoppe is content, for the most part, with textbook surveys and popular books that can often mislead the unwary. It is simply not sufficient, in a discussion of debt in Greece and Rome, to refer to a general history of interest rates, and if he had actually learned something of the functioning of ancient Greek city-states, he might have understood that even the rulers of a democracy, if they are the natural leaders of a small community, may have a serious concern for the future of their country. Hoppe's strength lies in his ability to conceive a theoretical model; he is far less successful in applying that model to historical reality.

Part of the weakness in his work stems from the thin reading he has done outside the province of liberal political and economic theory. Time after time, he contents himself with citations from Mises, Rothbard, and Bernard de Jouvenel when there are historical or scientific classics from which he might have drawn useful (and corrective) information. The lack of a bibliography makes it difficult to check his sources; a far more serious flaw, however, is his fondness for adopting oversimplified categories and applying them as if they were real. In the period leading up to World War I, for example, he regards England as a monarchy and France as a republic—as if a figurehead British monarch constitutes a substantive difference between the two regimes.

These flaws in his approach become more noticeable and more irritating when he discusses the politics of his own time and his adopted country. By taking a few policies and individual phrases out of context, he tries to indict the nationalist ideology of Patrick Buchanan and

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Samuel Francis as encouraging economic oppression and political tyranny. In speeches, he has gone so far as to accuse some conservatives of advocating "social nationalism" or even national socialism. This reckless and dangerous rhetoric plays into the hands of those leftists who would like to smear everyone on the right with the Nazi brush. Hoppe himself, with his brash style and take-no-prisoners response to criticism, has more than once opened himself up to a similar attack. I have heard him refer to criminals, gypsies, and "other human garbage"; even in this book, he concludes that proletarian consumers are more or less subhuman beasts. An enemy, or even an unwary reader, might wrongly conclude that Professor Hoppe is a bit of a "social nationalist" himself. In fact, Hans-Hermann Hoppe (despite protestations to the contrary) is a sentimental German monarchist, fond of his nation's great traditions and committed to the principles of private property and political liberty.

If Hoppe's dogmatism (too often unsupported by the necessary scholarship) and arrogance are often exasperating even to his admirers, his obvious merits—intellectual rigor, moral courage, originality—would cover a far greater multitude of intellectual sins than he has so far committed. His work is always interesting (if abominably written—writing in a second language is the least of his problems), and any conservative or libertarian with the slightest interest in political history should buy this book.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles *and president of The Rockford Institute.*

A Conservative in Crisis

by George Carey

Political, Philosophical, and Cultural Renewal: Collected Essays
by Francis Graham Wilson
New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers; 263 pp., $49.95

◆

Those who have only a passing acquaintance with the history of post-World War II conservatism are not likely even to have heard of Francis Graham Wilson. Yet, before the emergence of William F. Buckley, Jr., and *National Review* or the publication of Russell Kirk's *Conservative Mind*, Wilson had already marked out the grounds for an intellectual conservatism firmly grounded in the natural-law teachings of the Catholic Church. The chief reason for Wilson's relative obscurity resides in the fact that he was a reserved individual, a professor of political philosophy most at ease in academic surroundings pursuing his scholarly interests. In the course of his academic career—11 years at the University of Washington (1928-39) and 28 at the University of Illinois (1938-67)—he wrote six books, the most notable being a fine American political-theory text, *The American Political Mind* (1949), and *Public Opinion* (1962), the work he treasured most. *The Case for Conservatism* (1951), which seems to have attracted more attention than any of his other works, is very short, consisting of three lectures he gave on this subject at the University of Washington. He had an abiding interest in Spanish thought and culture, which prompted his last published book, *Political Thought of Modern Spain* (1967). At the time of his death in 1976, he was working on a manuscript entitled "An Anchor in the Latin Mind."

Political, Philosophical, and Cultural Renewal, a collection of 14 articles—most of them written in the late 30's and early 40's and five of them never previously published—represents only a very small fraction of what Wilson produced for a variety of professional journals over the course of his career. Nevertheless, the volume provides a comprehensive view of the foundations of Wilson's political thought, as well as insight into why it changed so markedly over the decades. Part one, consisting of three articles, deals with Wilson's views of human nature and his appraisal of modern competing ideologies whose distinctive characteristics, in his view, are attempts to explain and predict the dynamics of change. The five essays that compose Part two are all concerned with aspects of conservatism—its theoretical foundations, political character, sense of realism, and ethical nature. Part three, a less cohesive group of essays, deals with the political thought of Thomas Jefferson, the sources of pessimism in American politics over the decades, the treatment of public opinion in *The Federalist*, problems associated with the meaning of democracy and its justifications, and the fatal shortcomings of "open society" theories.

Even the most casual reader will soon realize that the Francis Graham Wilson who authored the essays written before and during World War II was probably a firm supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. While Wilson does not deal extensively with contemporary politics, there are clear indications of his partisan leanings. At one point, for instance, by way of commenting on the resurgence of the "organic conception" of society, he has nothing but praise for Roosevelt's third inaugural address. "As Roosevelt interprets the organicity of the American nation," he writes, "there is a continuity in the structure and morals of our society." He compares Roosevelt with Edmund Burke: "When Roosevelt speaks of the mind, the body, and the future of the nation, he is speaking as Burke might speak today." He concludes that Roosevelt's conception of the organic society "is, withal, a doctrine of conservative nationalism." Moreover, Wilson did not believe that conservatism was wedded to modern capitalism, at least in the form it had assumed in the United States. On this score, he refers to various papal encyclicals to justify his position that the "current system of capitalistic production" clearly stands in need of "fundamental" change. He was most critical of "industrial and financial leaders" who, "like the old French aristocracy," shunned their "true responsibilities of leadership."

In what sense, then, did Wilson write as a professed conservative? His answer, *circa* 1941, would rely heavily on the Thomistic differentiation between primary and secondary change. As he stresses in his "Theory of Conservatism," there is "a primary and secondary conservatism." "The primary or fundamental conservatism," he asserts, "is broad in nature, though it is constantly intermingled with the secondary or non-essential features of change." By way of illustration, he points out that "The conservative may well insist on the principle of private property while not maintaining the present system of the relations of production." Consequently, he claims that conservatism *is not necessarily a defense of the status quo*; it can accept and, indeed, even advocate any number of "secondary changes." But this is not the case with respect to primary change: Conservatism,

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he holds, is a "defense of primary elements in the social structure," such as property, family, and religion. From this vantage point, the New Deal could be characterized as producing only secondary changes. And, beyond any question, this is the way in which Wilson viewed it.

Reading through Wilson's essays, however, you can predict that a collision will occur; at some point, Wilson will come to see that what he takes to be secondary change is in fact undermining the primary or fundamental elements of the social structure. Even those essays written before and during World War II emphasize basic tenets of a Christian conservatism that separate their author from the philosophy underlying the secular welfare state. Central to Wilson's thought is a belief in a divinely ordained moral order knowable through reason, which allows men to "discover and develop the moral consciousness . . . inherent in human nature" and through which they can realize "their moral dignity" and inherent rights. But Wilson perceived that, as liberalism moved into the 20th century, it had come to embrace positivism, thus rendering it incapable of providing the "moral order" that could "sustain the freedom of individuals" through a "rational balance" between the competing demands of "liberty for the person and authority for the state." He agreed with Reinhold Niebuhr that

> the burden of proof is on those who now contend that a purely positivist or scientific conception of right and human dignity will preserve the necessary restraint on power and renew the conscience of those who rule.

Wilson could also see at an early juncture that "The deepest conflict of our time is probably to be found between the Marxian materialism and the Christian-democratic denial of the slavery of the spirit."

This was not all that set Wilson apart from the "progressive" tenets of New Deal ideology. He accepted inequality and hierarchy as givens, "part of the pattern of existence" that conservatives, unlike radicals or revolutionaries, accept "as a normal fact in social life." He acknowledged limits to effective "reform" or lasting change through public policy—that is, to what could and could not be accomplished through the agency of government. In this regard, he wrote that "our ideas of public policy arise ultimately from the assumptions we make about the nature or the quality of men." In contrast to utopians, reformers, and even liberal democrats, he emphasized that conservatives are not inclined to underestimate "the capacity of men to do evil" or to overlook what history teaches, namely, that "human nature is a mixture of rational and irrational behavior . . . a blending of cooperation and recalcitrance." He pointed out that progressivism professes to trust men, not because they possess God-given moral sensibilities, but because it considers them "malleable" and "educable," fully capable of adjusting to the new social order that progressivism would impose.

Wilson's essays written after World War II reveal how little he finds in liberalism that is to his liking. In an address to Georgetown graduate students in 1949, he assails the relativism of liberalism and the proposition advanced by its intellectual guardians "that anyone who urges a standard for public opinion, or interpretation of a rational order of life is, by definition, anti-democratic." He finds incredible the view, derived from the "open society" theory, that "Only a system of reasoning that does not assume that men can reach the truth is compatible with the participation of all men in the political process." In his article "Conservative in Crisis"—using Cicero's *De Officiis* as a point of departure—he goes so far as to maintain that liberalism stands a world apart from Cicero because it has no moral standards to determine whether society is facing a crisis or not. In an unpublished essay, "The Political Philosophy of Conservatism," written at some point in the early 1960's, he holds that the "barbarism of the modern world of politics" in the West, brought about by liberalism's relativism, secularism, and class warfare, finds its origins in the ideologies that propelled the French Revolution. He comes to appreciate, as he never did before, the profundity of Burke's *Reflections*.

In these essays, we see the basic reason for Wilson's sharp move to the political "right," his repudiation of the New Deal and, more generally, the centralized welfare state. While he acknowledged that "economic conditions were intimately related to [the] spiritual effectiveness of men," he also believed that "Christian conservatism" should strive to "make the economic aspects of life a subordinate phase of the force of Christian morality." As early as 1942, however, he perceived that "economic humanism," whose origins were purely secular, was now displacing Christian morality. Increasingly, Christians came to regard economic problems as "purely political in character"—that is, problems that could only be handled by the state. What added to his disillusionment were those politicians who used religion merely as a "technique for the control of the mass for the specific political purposes of the ruling class." Religion was thus debased, and appeals to its morality were little more than an-

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other political ploy in the "struggle for power." These developments, on his showing, only exacerbated one of the worst evils: class warfare. At the same time, Wilson—like Albert J. Nock—lamented that society was being "absorbed by the state."

We might say that Wilson was politically naive for failing to see from the outset the Machiavellian uses to which religion was being put by politicians. Yet, for his generation, the displacement of religion by economic humanism was not so readily apparent, having come about only with the emergence of the centralized welfare state. Even today, this displacement is not generally recognized; millions of good Catholics and Protestants believe it is their Christian duty to support the very politicians, mostly "progressives," who shamelessly employ such tactics. We might instead question whether Wilson's conservatism was as realistic as he contends in his short essay on the "Emergence of a Conservative Realism" (1940). Even on this score, though, we cannot be too harsh: Unlike some prominent leaders of the post-World War II conservative movement, Wilson was never taken in by Marx, Lenin, or Trotsky.

Finally, we are obliged to ask: Is there, as the title of this volume suggests, reason to believe that Wilson envisioned a "cultural renewal"? The closest he comes to anticipating such a development is found in his essay "The Conservative in Crisis." Here, Wilson contends that once "progressive man" has "lost his progress"—once he can no longer rely "on the undeviable stream of progress" through scientific advancement and the like—he must squarely face

> the ontological question which came so easily and naturally to the classical man and the Christian. He must decide what he is, and whether there is anything in him that supervenes the grimness of the day.

Or more generally:

> Secular progress alone withers in time of crisis, while under those conditions moral duty grows, the eternal order becomes more real, and humankind stands above the contingencies of disaster.

Wilson penned these words in the mid-1950's, but whether he continued to believe them is questionable, given the domestic turmoil of the following 20 years. What is not questionable are the Catholic foundations of his conservatism, which convey a reassuring message: No one, no matter how debased, is beyond redemption. Thus, the possibilities of cultural renewal for Wilson may well have come down to a matter of faith.

This is, on the whole, an interesting literary collection that should be of special interest to serious students of post-World War II conservatism, particularly those exploring the foundations of Catholic conservative thought, which has emerged as an important force in American politics.

George Carey, who teaches American political theory at Georgetown University, is the editor of the Political Science Reviewer.

On Prytania Street: Tending Lafayette Number 1

Catharine Savage Brosman

He pretends to be out walking—someone anonymous,
returning from the bank or CC's coffee bar,
or a tourist, alone; but his gait is stops and starts,
with furtive looks, half-turns and darting motions,
finally a sleight-of-hand, to find and extirpate
offending foliage—grasses, shoots of ivy,
miniature flowers—just a flash of color, an idea, yet
enough to crack a wall around the houses

of the dead. The cemetery gardens grow excessive,
cornucopias of green and red and yellow; but the grilles
have sunken like the mouths of toothless men;
the ancient skin of crypts is peeling, wrinkled
and discolored as a winter apple. Thought has dried
in there, the corpses shrunken in their crumbling
biers.—He sees me, picks up speed, but casts
an oblique glance at snaking fissures; pauses; sidles

over, brushing portions where the plaster is in pieces,
grabs a weed and jerks it outward by the roots,
then ambles innocently on—the dirt well shaken out
around the oaks, the plant now pocketed.

—We had a party once, among the tombs—neighbors
all, with sandwiches, a little band, some wine,
and ate and drank and talked while leaning
on the ancient monuments, our voices echoing

along the paths and through the emptiness. The filigree
of stone seemed light as air, and sculptures made
meringues; the angels, I remember, looked
as if they wished to smile, their lips about to part
in heavenly mirth.—The old man rounds the corner
towards Commander's Palace, pulls a pesky paw
of resurrection fern, and sashays back; the wall
has had its toilet for the day. Behind a screen—azalea

oleander, pine—I watch him cross the street,
go up his steps, and shortly take his place behind
the glass in his *orangerie*, snipping a wayward leaf,
adjusting stakes, then gazing out as though
at children playing, chiding silently the antics
of the years—old green never disheartened, branches,
roots, the stubborn stalk; and old death too, there
always, gloating by the tombs, holding one for him.

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by Scott P. Richert

Robbing Paul to Pay Paul

After 12 years under federal rule, Rockfordians are looking forward to the end of the *People Who Care* school-desegregation lawsuit on June 30, 2002. If the district administration and the school board have their way, however, the fat lady may not actually begin singing for another ten years.

One of the many elements that has made the Rockford case unique is the particular form of judicial taxation used to fund almost a third of a billion dollars in court-ordered "desegregation remedies"—everything from busing to magnet schools to pizza parties to owl pellets (don't ask). Using a novel interpretation of the Illinois Tort Immunity Act (which was designed to provide governmental entities with funds to pay one-time settlements in lawsuits), the school board, for nine years, levied an annual tax ranging from about $15 million to $30 million. Unlike normal tax increases, which have to be approved by referendum, the tort tax was levied without public approval, often at the order of federal magistrate P. Michael Mahoney.

Through the efforts of a crusading attorney, Michael O'Brien (who took the case *pro bono*), and a citizen watchdog group, Rockford Educating All Children (R.E.A.CH.), up to 16,000 local taxpayers each year protested the tort-tax levy. Finally, last year, the Illinois State Supreme Court declared the district's use of the tort tax illegal and ordered the district to refund all of the taxes paid under protest, a total of about $35 million.

Facing a heavy hit to its $270 million budget, the district negotiated a settlement with O'Brien, under which it could pay taxpayers 100 percent of what they are owed in three equal installments over the course of three years, or 80 percent if the district makes full payment by June 30. Moreover, the district was allowed to encourage taxpayers to waive their refunds, a strategy that seems to have worked: Currently, the district's liability is only $29 million if it pays over three years, or $23.2 million if it takes the 80-percent route.

If the district took the first option, it would have to come up with $9.67 million per year for three years. Now, cutting a little less than ten million dollars out of a budget of $270 million in order to free up the money for this year might be unpleasant, but it is certainly possible. And making those cuts would have certain advantages. First, if they were made in ongoing programs, they would only need to be made *once*; the money would continue to be available in the second and third years. Second, after the three years have ended, the school board could reduce the onerous property-tax burden on Rockford's taxpayers. And third, the district would not have to borrow the money, saving millions in interest.

Still, since the 80-percent option was proposed by the school district's lawyers, no one should have been surprised when the administration and the school board decided to take it. That left the district with three options: cut $23.2 million out of the budget when the fiscal year is already more than half over; find some way of raising the money; or combine cuts with "revenue enhancement." Obviously, if the school board and the administration were unwilling to cut $9.67 million, they certainly were not going to cut $23.2 million. Instead, the administration initially turned to another oddity of Illinois law, the "backdoor referendum," to raise the full $23.2 million. (It is likely that this was their plan all along, which is why they proposed the 80-percent option.) Under a backdoor referendum, a governmental body can issue bonds without voter approval, provided that it does not raise its overall tax rate to repay the bonds. Voters can force a referendum by gathering the signatures of five percent of the district's registered voters in 30 days. If they fail, the governmental body has a green light to issue the bonds.

Under intense questioning from local radio talk-show host Chris Bowman late last year, District 205 Superintendent Alan Brown confirmed that his administration was considering a backdoor referendum. Amidst a public outcry and vows by R.E.A.CH. and the Winnebago County Taxpayers' Association to gather the signatures necessary to force the referendum onto the ballot, the district dropped the plan. Instead, on January 8, the school board voted five to two to place a ten-year, $23.2 million alternative revenue bond referendum on the March 19 ballot. The bonds would be paid off at a cost of approximately $3.125 million per year, using revenue from corporate replacement taxes. However, since 6.1 percent of that revenue is currently used to cover the district's contributions to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, Social Security, FICA, and Medicare, and the rest is divided between the district's education and operations funds, the school board and the administration will either have to make a little over three million dollars in cuts or—and here's the rub—raise taxes an equivalent amount. Since the referendum is now coming in through the front door (so to speak), the district is no longer restricted from raising its overall tax rate.

While it seems unlikely that the referendum will pass under such conditions, stranger things have happened. In the mid-90's, the district issued bonds to fund the court-ordered construction of schools and guaranteed them with tort taxes. Rather than repudiate the bonds—an action that the Illinois Supreme Court, in its ruling, declared perfectly appropriate—the district put a referendum on the ballot to refinance the bonds and bring them under the education fund. Many of the same people who had fought the desegregation suit and judicial taxation endorsed the referendum, and it passed overwhelmingly. Now, taxpayers are saddled with that debt for another ten years.

If history repeats itself, the taxpayers of Rockford may well end up paying an additional $31.25 million in taxes over the next ten years in order to return to the tax protesters 80 percent of the money that was illegally taken from them over the previous nine years. And so, rather than Independence Day come early, June 30, 2002, might just be business as usual. c

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Letter From Argentina

by Russell Gordon

No Tears for Argentina

◆

"The failure of Argentina," writes V.S. Naipal, "so rich, so underpopulated, is one of the mysteries of our time." The 2001 Nobel laureate has not been the only observer to express bewilderment regarding the failings of a country so blessed with resources and so impoverished as a nation.

As Argentina slides into the economic abyss after defaulting on its $155-billion public debt, a brief glimpse into Argentine history reveals clear historical precedents. As domination by the Spanish and British Empires in the Western Hemisphere began to ebb in the early 19th century, a string of independence and secessionist movements swept the southern region. Argentina won its independence from Spain in 1810 largely by accommodating itself to British influence and interests. (While Britain helped Argentina gain independence from Spain, this did not preclude two British invasions, the latter of which resulted in British sovereignty over the South Atlantic islands, 400 miles off the Argentine coast.) After independence, nearly two centuries of Argentine statehood have been marked by chaos, revolt, hyperinflation, monetary instability, political assassinations, coups, and military dictatorships—only briefly interspersed with democracies, which ruled with little more aptitude than their unelected predecessors.

Geographically, Argentina has been endowed with a high percentage of arable land, vast grasslands and plains, and climates ranging from tropical forests and deserts to high alpine mountains. Historically, the agriculturally based Argentine economy produced staple grains and cattle. During World War II, Argentina sold beef and wheat to the Allied and Axis powers alike. Ever on both sides of the fence, Juan Perón showed his sympathy for Hitler and Mussolini openly, only declaring war on Germany within the week of its unconditional surrender. While Argentina undertook industrialization during the 1940's and 50's under Perón, the country's wealth could not prevent its decline. Argentina became the only country in the world to run an unprofitable state petroleum monopoly (post-privatization prices reached five dollars per gallon by 1999). The military dictatorship of 1976-82, which overthrew the chaotic rule of Eva Perón, was launched in the name of national order but grew into an orgy of institutionalized murder and robbery. More reflective Argentines will privately admit that the difference between their state and neighboring Chile is that, while Gen. Augusto Pinochet killed two to three thousand of his compatriots, he was a nationalist who helped stabilize and build his nation. The military *junta* in Argentina, in contrast, killed 20,000 to 30,000 mostly innocent civilians. The corruption and economic collapse that marked the *junta*'s rule left a fragile, heavily indebted state unprepared for the pseudo-democracy that succeeded it.

With significantly less arable land than Argentina, Chile became a major exporter of quality wines, raw minerals, salmon, and fruit for winter markets in the Northern Hemisphere. On average, Chileans work more hours *per capita* than any other nation, and their state is considered the most stable investment environment in Latin America. Even the trials of former military personnel, the election of the first socialist government since the CIA-inspired coup against Salvador Allende, and the effects of a global recession have not stopped Chile from standing on its feet rather than dropping to its knees before the International Monetary Fund.

In 1982, Argentina's failing military dictatorship tried to rally the nation by invading the Falkland Islands, but after the arrival of the British Expeditionary Force, the military gave up virtually without a fight (with the notable exception of the Argentine air force). Ironically, Argentines across the political and socio-economic spectrum feel victimized by the failure of their military action against an unarmed civilian populace of 2,000 largely eighth-generation Welsh sheep farmers on barren, windswept islands. At the center of the Argentine cultural identity is the stated aim to "reclaim our sovereign national territory and raise our flag over our Malvinas Islands," which has been a ethnically homogenous British colony for almost 200 years. Indeed, in

Russell Gordon

An impoverished woman lives on a curb outside the central train station of Retiro, seemingly oblivious to the placards for ex-president Carlos Menem's aborted run for a third term. The economy collapsed and unemployment increased significantly during the ten years of Menem's rule.

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international forums, previous Argentine foreign-ministry officials such as Adalberto Giavarini and his predecessor, Guido DiTella, reminded their British and U.S. counterparts that "the Malvinas are ours"—while, in the same breath, requesting international financial assistance. This psychology, which would be considered fringe or extremist elsewhere, is the foundation on which the Argentine national identity and foreign policy is based.

Raul Alfonsin's first post-*junta* democratic government in 1982 could not prevent unprecedented hyperinflation brought on by both his failed economic policies and those of his predecessors, who had left Argentina internationally isolated and economically compromised. With Argentine industry already in decline, his successor, Carlos Menem, encouraged by IMF and World Bank policies, drove the nail into the economic coffin by liquidating state industries and assets at bargain-basement prices, at times distributing state property to political allies. The state educational system has exacerbated social decline, and university drop-out levels have reached 70 percent, multiplying the despair and cynicism of a generation devoid of professional and economic opportunity. (The current joke is that Argentina's largest export is Argentines, who line up for blocks outside European embassies looking for any opportunity abroad.)

Russell Gordon

Former Argentine President Carlos Menem speaking at a (failed) campaign rally for then-Governor Eduardo Duhalde. Behind Menem is a banner of Eva Perón.

The historic failings of Argentina seem to have created a national inferiority complex. The populace would rather defend its faults than improve; all social ills are attributed to foreign interests; and xenophobia is as Argentine as the tango. Gregory Copley's statement about Turkey—that the bulk of the populace would rather "achieve national prestige than an improvement in living standards"—applies equally to Argentina.

Since this article was originally penned in November, Argentina has set a world record for turnovers in the presidency: five in a mere two weeks. The now defunct administration of Fernando De la Rua, who came to power on an anti-corruption platform, quickly became embroiled in a string of scandals that could only be described as Clintonesque. In the "Senate bribery scandal," intelligence services under De la Rua's personal friend Fernando Santibanes bribed opposition politicians to pass union-busting labor "reform" laws. So many politicians from across the political map were involved that, despite media scrutiny, "one hand washed the other," and no heads rolled.

Russell Gordon

After taking the oath of office, President Fernando de La Rua waves the presidential baton, while Vice President Carlos Chacho Alvarez blows a kiss to the crowd from the balcony of the Casa Rosada.

In 2000, the IMF had granted additional loans of more than $40 billion to help Argentina avoid defaulting on its debt payments, yet the country's Standard & Poors' risk factor soared to 5,471 points by Christmas 2001—more than twice as high as that of Nigeria or Pakistan. Throughout the crisis leading to De la Rua's downfall, opposition politicians obstructed reforms, administration officials defected, and the more notorious soared back into popularity.

As default loomed in December, violent street protests erupted after the government froze accounts to prevent a run on the banks. Massive criminal looting ensued, and police repression was ordered by De la Rua. With economic collapse, chaos, and 28 deaths on his conscience, De la Rua resigned from the presidency. His replacement, Adolfo Rodriguez Saa, spoke of an "orderly exit" from the peso-dollar parity that had helped destroy Argentina as an exporter. And just after Christmas, Saa and his treasury and finance secretary, Rodolfo Frigeri, delivered the nation a gift too big for the chimney: the largest default in history—"for the people," intoned Frigeri.

Saa's brief rule was characterized by untenable promises to conflicting interests: freezes on wage cuts and the creation of 100,000 jobs; resumption of so-

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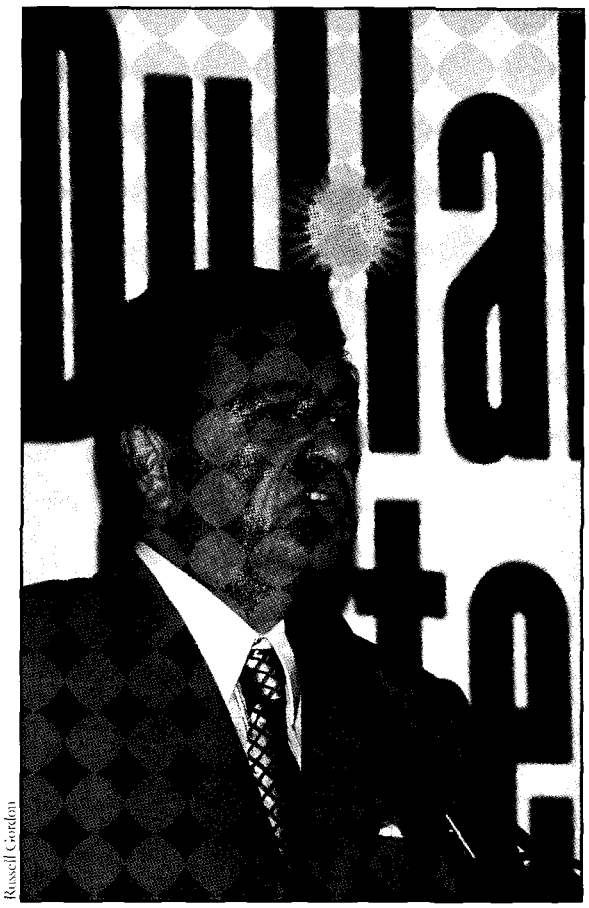

Russell Gordon

Former Governor of Buenos Aires Province and current President Eduardo Duhalde has reportedly received at least one million dollars from Mexico's Juarez cartel of narcotraffickers.

cial services previously axed; and payment of state salaries with "Argentinos"—baseless currency bonds that a *Financial Times* editorial on January 27 termed "Mickey Mouse money": "Printing money to satisfy popular desire for spending unmatched by taxation is a recipe for chaos."

Saa disappeared within days, resigning ostensibly because of a "lack of support" within his own Perónist Party. And while the Argentine protesters, the IMF, and international creditors prescribed a "new alternative" for leadership as the key to economic viability, the Argentine political class went forward in reverse, placing millionaire real-estate magnate and former Buenos Aires governor Eduardo Duhalde—a known associate of the Juarez narco-cartel—in the presidential office. Duhalde had been overwhelmingly defeated in the 1999 presidential elections—even after using one million dollars from the Juarez drug cartel to buy votes. Despite U.S. Senate records of his narco-laundering endeavors, his corrupt and incompetent provincial tenure, and his efforts to devalue the peso, Duhalde was heralded in the national and international press as "the last chance" to save Argentina.

The handwriting is on the wall, as obvious as the graffiti in a Buenos Aires slum. In the 2001 Global Competitiveness Report, published by Harvard University's World Economic Forum, Argentina was ranked 53rd out of 75 countries, down there with the war-wracked nations of Colombia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. A recent editorial by James Neilson in the English-language *Buenos Aires Herald* (November 8, 2001) boldly addresses the Argentine perspective about the current impasse:

> Argentina has been edging nearer to . . . the knacker's yard where "failed states" are broken up. Some suspect it will be soon . . . The trouble is, people have been going on for decades about just how exceptionally bright they think the Argentines are, but this belief, which . . . is popular among Argentine intellectuals, has surely contributed . . . to the debacle by making too many . . . assume that the country's plight is none of their doing, or that, seeing they are so clever, they will find it easy to wriggle out of any hole they may have fallen into while their eyes were fixed on the stars. In any case, even if it were to be proved that Argentina really is home to an astonishing number of Ubermenschen that would be no consolation at all: the Titanic would have gone down just as fast if every single passenger had been a PhD.

The point at which failed nations should be cut loose from the umbilical cord of the international financial institutions that have enabled their chronic dysfunction must be considered with sobriety. The nonviable nation-state differs little from the addict: every cover-up for the addiction, every injection or fix, every public excuse only prolongs the inevitable, drags others down, and compounds the fallout. Col. David Hackworth has often counseled military leaders: "Do not reinforce failure." While Argentina's default on its debt repayment may send shock waves throughout emerging markets and exacerbate the global recession, a call to "abandon ship" might prove to be the only way to prevent the rest of the world's economy from sharing Argentina's fate.

Russell Gordon is a journalist and photographer based in Mexico City.

Letter From Italy

by Alberto Carosa

Italian Artworks Targeted by Muslims

When the Taliban in Afghanistan were busy destroying ancient gigantic stone statues of Buddha, some commentators asked: What's next? Now, a fundamentalist Muslim group known as Unione dei Musulmani d'Italia (Italy's Union of Muslims) has demanded that a priceless 15th-century fresco, which they call "obscene and blasphemous," be removed from San Petronio, the 14th-century cathedral in Bologna.

"A new Rushdie case? Perhaps, but only six centuries late," noted *il Giornale* on June 27, 2001. On June 7, 2001, the Unione wrote Pope John Paul II and Giacomo Cardinal Biffi, the archbishop of Bologna, calling for the fresco to be destroyed and the Catholic Church to apologize to the Islamic community "in much the same way as your superior, the non-EU pontiff John Paul II, has already asked for pardon from the Jews and Orthodox Greeks." Neither the Vatican nor Bologna's archbishop responded to the Unione's letter.

The fresco depicts the sixth-century founder of Islam, Muhammad, naked and burning in the flames of Hell. It was painted by the early Renaissance master Giovanni da Modena on the wall of the Bolognini chapel as part of a wider scene based on the Last Judgment, showing Hell with a monstrous Lucifer at the cen-

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ter, munching on a sinner. To his left, a grimacing, horned demon drags the naked figure of Muhammad down to the underworld. The Unione claims that the fresco compromised relations between Catholics and Muslims, arguing that it is far more offensive than Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Muslims, the Unione said, had never depicted Jesus or the Virgin Mary naked on the walls of a mosque. (They failed to note, however, that they consider depicting any human being in an image on the wall of a Mosque—or anywhere, for that matter—idolatry, and it is forbidden.)

The Unione, headquartered in the outskirts of Rome, has announced it will hold demonstrations outside the capital's mosque—the largest in Europe—despite the fact that the head of the local Islamic Cultural Center said that not all Muslims in Bologna agreed that the fresco should be removed. So far, no such demonstration has taken place. The *International Herald Tribune*'s *Italy Daily* supplement may have been right to describe the Unione as a "tiny Muslim organization."

Still, the social and cultural implications of the controversy could be enormous, since the Unione contends that the problem started in the Middle Ages with Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Italy's national poet, who, in Canto 28 of the *Inferno*, placed Muhammad in the ninth circle of Hell alongside other idolators and schismatics. The fresco was based on this literary masterpiece, written 100 years earlier. The Unione also demands that the teaching of Dante be suspended in Italian schools in immigrant areas since, in their words, "nothing against the prophet Jesus is studied in our schools."

The World Muslim League, which operates out of the mosque in Rome, said the request was "pure madness" and called the petition "more than silly." But Roberto de Mattei, the president of a Rome-based think tank, Centro Culturale Lepanto (named after the 1571 battle that saw a huge Muslim fleet routed by the Christian forces), was of a somewhat different opinion. "The demand exposes the aggressive nature of Islamic fundamentalism, which never has renounced its goal to dominate Europe one day," he told the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (July 13-15, 2001). "What other explanation is there for attempts to destroy Italy's cultural heritage?"

The fact that the controversy erupted in Bologna may not be coincidental. In September 2000, Giacomo Cardinal Biffi set off a tempest when he issued a pastoral letter on Muslim immigration to Italy and the dangers posed by Islamic proselytizing. He stated that it would be best if Italy changed its immigration policy to favor immigrants who were Catholic, rather than Muslim, in order to "save the nation's identity." In his opinion, economic and social criteria alone should not be the guidelines for allowing immigrants to adopt Italy as their home. Cardinal Biffi repeatedly stressed the incompatibility of certain aspects of Muslim culture and religion with the traditions of Italy: different eating habits, family rights, a different weekly holy day, the concept of the role of women in society, polygamy, and a fundamentalist view of public life in which religion is one with politics. "Europe must either become Christian again or it will become Muslim," he argued, and he rejected accusations that his suggestion amounts to discrimination on the basis of religion. "There is no right to invasion!" the cardinal said. "A country can let whom it wants into its house." Anti-Muslim feelings were further fueled by the Northern League, now part of the center-right government led by Silvio Berlusconi, which has campaigned on an anti-immigration platform and called for the defense of Christian society against outside influences. Berlusconi has also held marches to protest the building of mosques in Italy.

The spokesman for the Bologna curia confirmed that, even if the cardinal wanted to modify or erase the fresco, he would not be able to. In Italy, all public monuments, including the Bologna basilica, are state property, and the approval of the Ministry of Culture is needed to move even a single stone. The same applies to Dante's poetry: In Italy, school syllabi are determined by the Ministry of Public Education, and it is highly unlikely that the new center-right government would ever consider, let alone accede to, such a request.

After all, why should others change their cultural patterns to please the Muslims, who would never change theirs for the sake of others? What if Catholics started asking that insults and threats to Christians be removed from the decorations in many mosques and from the Koran itself?

Alberto Carosa is the editor of Famiglia Domani Flash, *a pro-family newsletter published in Rome.*

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

The Trees of Autumn

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It is a warm night for November, even in Texas. Thanksgiving is a few days away, and the warm weather, interrupted by a cool snap, has returned, reimposing itself like an unwelcome guest on an autumn background of falling leaves and brown, seemingly endless prairie stretching north to distant Canada. Southeast from Waco, along Highway 6 to Bryan and the Gulf Coast beyond, Santa has made his first appearance, starring in a light show ("Santa's Wonderland") staked out in a cow pasture bordered by barbed wire and the cracked pavement of the highway. I turn on the air conditioner to cool the stuffy car interior. My wife shakes her head. "Welcome back to Texas and eighty degrees at Thanksgiving." I need a Dr. Pepper.

Welcome back, indeed. Sitting on the porch of my parent's home in Houston, I'm watching a grey squirrel bury a pecan amongst the leaves and bare roots of a massive live oak and trying to imagine the yard as it was 35 years ago, before all the roads were paved, before city water, before the crawdads and water moccasins disappeared from the creek and the ubiquitous horny toads vanished. In those days, my brothers and I could roam the adjacent fields unmolested. We kept a pet raccoon for a time. My younger brother once brought home a copperhead for my mother's inspection and was quite upset when Daddy whacked its head off with a hoe. Out near Bear Creek, the farmers and stockmen hung the corpses of slain predators on a fence at a place we called "Wolf Corners." We used to go out there on Sunday afternoons to inspect the week's kill.

The air has that smoky look it takes on this time of year, and the shadows are encroaching on the house even at midday. The squirrel finishes his work and dashes up the live oak, grown thick and battered since its early days. The magnolia is still there, its bright green, waxy foliage standing out against the fallen brown leaves of the neighboring sycamore. The twin mimosas are gone. I remember climbing the thick limbs of the larger one that

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stretched over the driveway, the pinks and greens of the serrated leaves lending an illusory tropical air to the yard. The century plant, prehistoric and fearsome in appearance, bloomed and died when I was in high school.

The kids want to collect pecans, so we take buckets from Daddy's toolshed and head for the backyard. A recent storm has brought down the last of them, and some are still covered in the green pods that encase the shell and the oily, sweet-tasting meat. The pine near the fence is dying, looking for all the world like the sailless mast of a shipwreck. The huge elm, its ponderous limbs leaning on the roof of the house, the pecan trees, full of squirrels' nests, the hackberry, and the towering sycamore remain.

Was the sycamore always so big? Maybe my memory is playing tricks on me. Or was it the scale of boyhood adventures that made all trees seem mighty beanstalks stretching to the sky and giants and treasures beyond? My younger brother once climbed to its top, as the tree swayed in a stiff wind. My mother tells me I was nonchalantly munching on a snack when I informed her he was clinging to the swaying treetop and couldn't get down. I can't remember just how he did get down, only that the tree seemed so invulnerable, even then. Not even a tornado I once watched dance only a few yards away from it disturbed the invincible sycamore of my memory.

It seems like an act of defiance to allow kids to climb trees these days. Maybe that's why the sight of my son dangling from the limbs of the live oak gladdens my heart. Or maybe it is something else.

We pick up the pecans, crushing some beneath our heels to snack on. The noise stirs some doves near the fenceline to flight, and I notice the grapevine still clinging to the fence. We used to make homemade wine with its fruit.

Daddy and I sit out on the porch to watch the rest of the day go by, and I ask him about the trees. He claims he planted too damn many of them. The trees, some of them dying, now surround the house, leaving mountains of dead leaves to clean up and causing no end of trouble. Even so, he remembers where he got each one—this one from the property of friends, that one from a relative—and when he planted them in this little patch of coastal grassland where he built a house and raised a family.

That was nearly 50 years ago.

We talk of my parents moving. The city swallowed our little oasis decades ago. Apart from this island of memory and attachment, what was home is no longer a pleasant place to live. I wonder aloud if we could move the house. But a voice in my head whispers, "What of the trees?"

Wayne Allensworth lives in Keller, Texas.

Letter From London

by Andrei Navrozov

Tea With Trotsky

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A few months ago, when word of an article of mine about the events of September 11 went round the Russian community in London, I received a telephone call inviting me to a private meeting with Boris Berezovsky. (A relevant question to ponder is whether those Westerners who are unfamiliar with the name have somehow missed out, since it may well be argued that many people who quietly went about their business in the 1930's without bothering to ask who Trotsky was, and why he was ever so cross with Stalin, were emotionally better prepared for the paradox of an approaching world war that would align the West with Soviet Russia. To the writer, to the historian, and to every other species of freethinking pest that troubles our society, however, the perfect emotional equilibrium of a man shoved into the cattle car that bears him to an unspecified destination has not always been the consummate ideal. This worrisome, often lonely, unshaven or bespectacled human-type wants to ferret out the very worst of what there is to learn of his epoch, and what I write here is addressed to him.)

At home, Berezovsky is vilified as an "oligarch" by the secret-police *junta* that has borne President Vladimir Putin, which means that the label is intentionally misleading and can be discarded. I have previously written in this space that setting up these bigwigs was an early initiative of that selfsame *junta*, with the objective of staging a pantomime of free enterprise attractive to Western investment not unlike the simulacrum of constitutional liberty embodied by the Duma and other democratist institutions in post-*perestroika* Russia. Of the hundreds, perhaps thousands, who had been chosen almost at random to receive the bounteous rewards of various privatizations and shareouts, only a couple—Berezovsky most prominently—went bad in the end and began biting the hand that fed them. At present, there is an order for his arrest, and those who sympathize with his plight will not be surprised to hear of the man's imminent extradition to Russia, nor, for that matter, of his tragic death in a car crash.

In the West, Berezovsky has been called an entrepreneur, a tycoon, a billionaire, and a mafioso. The last appellation was given him by *Forbes*, whereupon he successfully sued the magazine for slander in Britain, where he resides, in a case that went all the way up to the House of Lords. But whatever the label, it is evidently less political than it is prosaic, leading one to ask why on earth anybody so described should be touted as the Trotsky of our time. A flippant answer is that we live in prosaic times. A more substantive reply would acknowledge that, in the 21st century, as George Orwell foresaw back in 1948, big books, big words, big ideas, and all the rest of the romantic *mise-en-scène* of political rebellion that endured until Trotsky's day, count for nothing or next to nothing. Big money, on the other hand—that is to say, money measured in hundreds of billions of dollars—is, if anything, more politically pivotal and historically momentous than ever before. A crucial caveat to this last, however, is that while modern money is certainly mightier than the modern pen, the modern sword is still the mightiest thing on earth, and those who suppose that world dominion can be bought with paper money are quite as deluded as the many ordinary Americans who will happily tell you that their planet is safe for democracy so long as its denizens drink Coke and watch CNN.

Jumping ahead to the conclusion of our chat over tea with biscuits, I must say that Berezovsky's inability to accept that crucial caveat is one of his most notable intellectual limitations: "Verily, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle," I kept thinking during the three hours of conversation, "than it is for a billionaire to admit that economics is not the answer to everything." So, in his own day, it was quite impossible for Trotsky to accept the notion that his own cultural capital—his education, his oratory, his knowledge of foreign languages, or, for

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that matter, his penmanship or his fashion sense—might not entitle him to the eminence of Stalin, apparently a Georgian bandit with only a pockmarked face and a soldier's tunic to his name, who had nonetheless attained, and would always retain, that eminence with his subtle cunning, his will to power, and his way with the ice pick. "The most outstanding mediocrity in our Party," as the great *Kulturträger* Trotsky once ridiculed him, Stalin understood that culture was not the answer to everything.

We plunge into the interview *in medias res*, with Berezovsky stating that he has assembled an archive of documentary evidence, and prepared for release a documentary film based upon it, demonstrating that the notorious apartment-building bombings in Moscow two years ago were perpetrated by the secret police on Putin's orders and not, as Putin has maintained, by Chechens unknown on the orders of shadowy Muslim warlords. This had been a working assumption of mine when I published my article on the events of September 11, if only because Putin's clamorous insistence on the political and religious consanguinity of the two groups of conspirators—starting on the very day of September 11, before any investigation of the hijackings had taken place—proved such an important lever for cranking up public opinion in the West in favor of a new strategic alignment with the Kremlin. "We are now all of us victims of the menace of Islam," Putin has, in effect, told the United States and Britain,

> but if Continental Europe is absorbed into Russia's sphere of influence—finally creating the "common European home" first proposed by President Gorbachev to President Bush—then Russia will serve the West as the shield, and if need be the sword, against the Muslim hordes.

Producing conclusive evidence that Putin's agents were behind the Moscow bombings would be tantamount to proving Putin's complicity in the September 11 operation, which all too easily centered on the shadowy Osama bin Laden, who, like many of the *mujahedin* commanders allegedly fighting the Russians during the Soviet occupation—some of them later joining, and betraying, Ahmad Shah Massoud, Afghanistan's only credible anti-Taliban force apart from the Moscow-controlled Northern Alliance—may have been a Soviet double agent from the beginning. But Berezovsky, who expects to use the material he has gathered to shame the Russian parliament into an investigation of the Moscow bombings, goes a good deal further. He is convinced that the timing of the bombings is a clue to the time scale of the planning of the September 11 operation. Hence, he believes, it is utterly implausible that, during the nearly two years of worldwide terrorist preparations for the attack, involving hundreds of amateur conspirators, neither the CIA nor the Israeli intelligence services operating in the Middle East knew anything of the conspiracy. In other words, even though Franklin D. Roosevelt's probable foreknowledge of Pearl Harbor remains unproved as a matter of historical fact, the Pearl Harbor of our epoch, meant once again to align Washington with Moscow in a war over the future of Europe, is likely, in Berezovsky's opinion, to be laid bare to international scrutiny in the weeks, months, or years to come. Then Putin falls.

What falls then, in my own mind, is a long, wide shadow. It is the shadow between Berezovsky's deeply informed premise and his naively wishful conclusion, suggesting that the pen, to say nothing of the money, is mightier than the sword. Because the weapon in question—the modern totalitarian weapon now wielded by Putin—is not the ice pick, the gun, the tank, or the rest of the rusting paraphernalia of individual vengeance and territorial conquest from Genghis Khan to Stalin, but the 21st-century nuclear superpower whose immensely sophisticated and cunning leaders have successfully lured their only credible opponent into an all-but-irreversible policy of lackadaisical fraternization, market interdependence, and unilateral disarmament. Moreover, if, as Berezovsky must logically accept, the relationship between the intelligence establishment in Russia (where it has overtly constituted the ruling class since the death of Brezhnev) and in the United States (where it has been augmenting its power clandestinely since the Kennedy assassination) exists on another, still deeper and closer—perhaps symbiotic—level than that of their respective foreign policies, then his dream of busting open the Pearl Harbor of our time is more than a little absurd.

Thus we get philosophical. What *is* modern totalitarianism? And again, I think of how difficult it must be for him to see the future through his billions, as he tells me what I have heard on countless other occasions, in both the United States and Europe, from prominent businessmen who unswervingly believe that all is for the best (except antitrust legislation and capital-gains taxes) in this best of all possible worlds (where big money makes even bigger money). Thus, liberty will surely triumph the world over (because it is more ergonomic). Tyranny will inevitably fall away (because it hinders innovation). Freedom of speech is important (after all, somebody makes money selling newspapers). And democracy is the worst form of government except all the others (because they nationalize industries and print funny money).

But what has any of it to do with *modern* totalitarianism, the system now being perfected by Putin's *junta* with tacit approval from the rest of the world once called free? Nothing. Indeed, how can any of the rich man's inside-out Marxism—or, for that matter, the average man's knee-jerk Thatcherism—so much as refer to something so fundamentally new, uncharted, and unknown? For, while it is clear that, among others, the new system recombines and reconstitutes some known elements of Lenin's New Economic Policy, Stalin's practice of strategic deception, Beria's concept of political tolerance, Khrushchev's cultural liberalism, Mussolini's *compromesso* with the Church, Hitler's *laissez-faire* with respect to small and medium-size business, New Communist China's openness to foreign investment, the European Community's principle of transnational bureaucratism, and America's own 40-year experience with the taxidermy of democratic institutions, not a single study of that system as a whole has yet been published. Just because Berezovsky is product enough of it to understand its potential for deception and evil does not mean that he is in a position to appreciate its actual, for all intents and purposes infinite, vitality and strength.

And so we part and go our separate ways—he, a new Trotsky with all the panache of a warrior on a white charger; I, with the crooked smile of a tired old unbeliever under the bleak lamps of the No. 14 double-decker bus.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

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by Srdja Trifkovic

We Are the World

In the aftermath of September 11, the chairman of the House International Relations Committee noted that the war on terrorism has revealed the need to overhaul U.S. foreign policy. "Can anyone doubt that the sum of our efforts has been insufficient?" asked Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) on October 10, opening a hearing into the role of public diplomacy in the campaign against terrorism. "Our efforts at self-defense, which should be supported by every decent person on this planet, instead spark riots that threaten governments that dare to cooperate with us."

Mr. Hyde was referring to the Islamic world, of course. According to a disquieting recent poll, America's image abroad is deeply at odds with its self-perception everywhere, including Western Europe. The Pew Charitable Trust's survey of the world's opinion-forming elites (*http://www.people-press.org/1219012.htm*) found that 56 percent of respondents outside of the United States think that U.S. foreign policy—especially in the Middle East—was a major cause of the attacks.

In France, *Le Monde*'s Herve Kempf summed up the mood of many Europeans when he wrote (January 8) that the attacks "did not change America's position on dealing with major world issues." This view was shared by Pascal Boniface of the Institute for International Strategic Relations, who commented in the Parisian daily *Libération* (January 7) that the collapse of the Taliban reinforces Americans' belief that they are almost always right and that they can always impose their point of view: "America has learned nothing and could face other rude awakenings." On the conservative side, Jean-Pierre Ferrier lamented, in *Le Figaro* (January 4), the demise of Europe and its military incompetence, manifested in three wars initiated and led by the United States in the past ten years:

> Iraq presented the opportunity to verify the individual faithfulness of the members of the Alliance. Kosovo showed the minimal role that was played by European allies whose participation the Pentagon considered as a weakening factor militarily but nevertheless diplomatically useful. Afghanistan served to summarize the situation: The allies have the obligation to participate in missions decided by the United States following the guidelines determined by Washington. In each instance the rules are the same: At most, the Europeans have the right to information, or to the impression that they have been kept informed.

In Russia, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*'s Vasiliy Safronchuk warned on December 29 there have been no real changes inside Russia or in its relations with the West since September 11. The current regime is wooing the West, hoping for Russia to be recognized as a partner, but that is not acceptable those who seek global hegemony:

> It is surprising how easily Putin fell for the antiterrorist trap Bush set up for him. He readily joined the U.S. action against Afghanistan and used his influence to get Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to pitch in and offer their bases for the U.S. aviation and airborne troops. The ungrateful Washington responded by declaring its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty . . . Putin has Russia bonded with the U.S. war chariot against all those who oppose American global hegemony.

While the decision by President Bush to serve formal notice on December 13 that the United States was pulling out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with Russia was largely ignored at home, abroad it was seen as his most important foreign-policy decision so far. Most U.S. allies in the antiterrorist struggle see the step as proof that Washington's multilateralist rhetoric was only a tool used to help the administration garner international support immediately after the terror attacks. A commentator for the London *Independent* summed up the mood on December 14:

> Increasingly, the question is being asked: is the administration, emboldened by military success in Afghanistan, reverting to the bad old days before 11 September? The U.S. is again riding roughshod over international deals it does not like . . . and talking of sending its hi-tech posses after Iraq and other countries with whom it has scores to settle.

It is remarkable that not one single major daily newspaper in Europe or Canada endorsed President Bush's argument that September 11 underscored the need for missile defense. Indeed, one commentator after another made the opposite case: that the terrorist attacks show the uselessness of a missile shield. The view from the Kremlin was given by Anatoli Anisimov in Moscow's official *Parlamentskaya Gazeta* (December 15):

> Everything we have heard over the last few years about the basically new non-confrontational, if not partner-like, relationships between the U.S. and Russia, has turned out to be empty talk. When the Americans needed support for their military action in Afghanistan, they called us a partner. But they forgot the partnership once they decided that they wanted to scrap the ABM Treaty, a cornerstone of the disarmament policy. It is true what people say about charity beginning at home. With the damage done, no praise for President Putin's restraint will repair it.

In Britain, the *Economist* commented on December 15 that "Mr Bush is right to take a radical look at America's arms-control commitments in a dangerous world," but added that the test of any treaty or policy should be a practical one:

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whether it enhances stability and security.

> Whatever happens next—whether the treaty is amended, replaced by some new understanding with Russia or just scrapped—the same stability-preserving test should apply. Announcing America's intention to withdraw increases pressure on Russia to reach a new understanding. Scrapping the treaty without one could set off a new arms race, undermining security all round.

On December 14, the *Economist*'s online column "Global Agenda" greeted with alarm President Bush's decision to scrap the treaty before it is clear what will replace it:

> The worry is that China may now want to build up and modernise its nuclear arsenal—which many in Washington argue would have happened anyway. Some of Mr Bush's advisers argue that, for similar reasons, legally-binding international arms-control agreements are a waste of time: friends have no need of them; adversaries cheat, thus creating a false sense of security. But the legal norms embodied in treaties do at least give everyone the right to know what others are up to, and to act when rules are broken.

In France, the verdict on President Bush's action was uniformly negative. As Washington correspondent Jean-Jacques Mevel reported for *Le Figaro* (December 13):

> The White House's unilateral decision will undoubtedly bring to the forefront the accusation that the U.S. is opportunistic . . . Its reasoning is clear: What friend or ally could dare raise its voice in protest as long as the president is at war against Osama Ben Laden and his terrorists? . . . The hardliners in the Bush administration are now in the lead.

In Belgium, Mia Doornaert argued in *De Standaard* (January 3) that "America does not feel accountable to anyone about the goals of its future operations":

> It insulted Putin by withdrawing from the ABM Treaty. Moreover, the United States worried friend and foe by talking about possible attacks against Iraq. That obvious unilateralism is a strange result of '9/11'—the date that should have made the US realize that even the mightiest nation does not live on an island.

In Holland, the *Trouw*'s editorial of December 24 maintained that, in the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, the international coalition against terrorism is creaking because the United States is being suspected of wanting to bomb other countries:

> The United States is being reproached, and not without reason, that it is dealing as opportunistically and arrogantly with the world as it did before September 11. This Administration is doing much too little to take the sting out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a conflict that contributes to the hate and jealousy in the Arabic and Muslim world with regard to everything which the U.S. stands for. Thus apparently nothing has changed since the eleventh of September. . . . That is a pity, because terrorism is far from eradicated in the world, and every momentum to deny its material and emotional base should be grasped.

The tone of Middle Eastern commentary was much harsher and, on the whole, rather gloomy. The most respected daily newspaper in the Arab world, Cairo's *Al Ahram*, commented on the last day of 2001:

> The Arab world has never suffered such horrible setbacks—in all its issues—as in 2001. This started with the arrival of President Bush and the election of Sharon in Israel. Arabs have shown total inability to make predictions about the new American administration. Arab naivete reached the point that some of them even believed Bush's background in the oil industry and his father's old relations could make American policies more sympathetic to Arabs and less biased toward Israel. But events have proven the opposite to be the case . . . The Arab world witnessed no change in either thinking or policies. . . . They have failed to rearrange their ranks, reconcile belligerent parties, and emerge from the tunnel of empty exaggerations to realistic, effective policies. . . . Naturally then, the Middle East reached an impasse with the first American shock [on September 11]; Israel kidnapped the Palestinian issue under the excuse of fighting terrorism.

In the first week of the new year, the State Department decided to deal with the United States' image problem in the Islamic world by drafting Muhammad Ali into the administration's public-relations campaign. He has been recruited by Hollywood to star in a 30-second spot to be aired in Muslim nations. That the effort is doomed became clear from Ali's initial statement on the September 11 attacks:

> People say a Muslim caused this destruction. I am angry that the world sees a certain group of Islam followers who caused this destruction, but they are not real Muslims. They are racist fanatics who call themselves Muslims, permitting this murder of thousands . . . Islam is a religion of peace. It does not promote terrorism or killing people.

This p.c. malarkey is useful for domestic tranquilization, but it defies belief that the geniuses at Foggy Bottom are countering the animosity caused by U.S. policy in the Middle East by having a black Muslim convert preach to his coreligionists about who the "real Muslims" are and what Islam is really all about. New York advertising executive Charlotte Beers, who has been recruited to "direct the marketing of American values to the Muslim world, especially to young men who can fill the ranks of militant movements," has a lot of learning to do. c

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LAW

When They Bare the Iron Hand

by Mark Royden Winchell

"Beware the people weeping /
When they bare the iron hand"
—Herman Melville, "The Martyr"

It is one of the most famous photographs of the nineteenth century: Alexander Gardner's picture of four hooded figures dangling from a gallows in the old federal penitentiary in Washington, D.C. on July 7, 1865. On that sweltering afternoon, about a hundred civilians mingled in the courtyard below, while soldiers patrolled the walkway on top of the brick wall behind the gallows. Throughout this spectacle, the crowd chanted, "Remember Booth the murderer." John Wilkes Booth, however, was not present, having been shot to death in a Maryland barn by a Union soldier less than three months earlier. The four persons hanged had been convicted of conspiring with Booth in his assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Three of the four—George Atzerodt, David Herold, and Lewis Payne—were lowlifes who had indeed been privy to Booth's plot. The fourth, Mrs. Mary Surratt, was almost certainly a scapegoat sacrificed to the bloodlust of a grieving nation. How these four prisoners came to their fate (deserved or not) is a cautionary tale for our time.

The murder of Lincoln at Ford's Theater on the evening of April 14, 1865, only five days after Lee's surrender to Grant, produced a national trauma. The end of the War Between the States seemed to promise the survival of the Union. Lincoln advocated national reconciliation, and many in the North were willing to acquiesce to a policy of relative leniency toward the South. Given the President's popularity, radicals within his own party were forced to suppress their desire for retribution. In particular, Lincoln's second inaugural address offered healing for a war-torn people. But at least one member of the crowd that heard that address was in no mood for healing. John Wilkes Booth was a charismatic young actor and Southern sympathizer who felt guilty for never having served in the Confederate army. When his earlier plan to kidnap Lincoln and exchange him for a large number of rebel prisoners proved unfeasible, Booth resolved to avenge the South by killing the President.

While the elimination of Lincoln might have aided the Southern cause during the war, it proved absolutely disastrous coming so soon after the end of hostilities. Any desire for national reconciliation came to an abrupt end in the North, as cries of recrimination were immediately forthcoming from the newspapers and pulpits of the conquering region. Even the people of the South, who might have secretly rejoiced at the death of their enemy, knew that their lot would now be harder. (When the old Southern patriarch Colonel Cameron hears of Lincoln's death in D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, he declares: "Our best friend is gone. What will become of us now?") The more vindictive radicals, whom Lincoln had been able to hold in check, were now running the country, while Lincoln himself was viewed as a martyr. Booth might have assured his own place in history, but it was as an archvillain rather than a Southern Brutus.

If the survival of the Union seemed assured by the end of the war, Lincoln's death cast that prospect into doubt. Although political assassinations were common in Europe, Lincoln was the first American president to be struck down by violence. At the same time, Lewis Payne had made a futile attempt on the life of Secretary of State William Seward, while George Atzerodt had been instructed to kill Vice President Andrew Johnson. During four years of war, the Confederate army had never sought to overthrow the Northern government. (The South simply wanted to leave the Union in peace.) Even the election of 1864 was allowed to proceed in the midst of war. Now a band of demented conspirators appeared to threaten an American *coup d'etat*. It would have required extraordinary statesmanship to preserve constitutional liberties in the face of the ensuing national hysteria. The new President, Andrew Johnson (a feckless alcoholic who had been put on the national ticket for purely political reasons), and the *de facto* ruler of the country, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, did not even try.

The aspect of the Lincoln conspiracy trial that has the most relevance for our present situation was the decision to try Atzerodt, Herold, Payne, and Mrs. Surratt in a military tribunal. Never before had American civilians been subjected to military jurisprudence during peacetime. Five years earlier, such a trial would have been virtually unthinkable. During the War Between the States, however, the trying of civilians in military courts (often for trivial offenses) and the suspension of *habeas corpus* became common. By making the survival of the Union his overarching goal, Lincoln sought to justify the widespread disregard of civil liberties. He argued somewhat disingenuously that, if the Union fell, there would no longer be any civil authority for preserving the Constitution. (He would not admit the possibility of *two* separate constitutional republics existing on American soil.) Given the corrosive effect of such reasoning, it was not difficult for Lincoln's successors to propose using a military tribunal to try those accused of complicity in his murder. According to their twisted logic, this expedient was justified by the fact that the District of Columbia was a military venue and Lincoln was Commander in Chief.

Although several prominent Northern newspapers (particularly the *New York World* and the *New York Tribune*) denounced the military trial as unconstitutional (the *World* called it a "star chamber"), the general public wanted vengeance. Mob actions against Southerners, Copperheads, and theatrical people of no discernible political beliefs were common. With the public denied the satisfaction of Booth's trial and execution, attention quickly turned to his accomplices. Although there was sufficient evidence to convict Atzerodt, Herold, and Payne in a civilian court, the process would not have been as efficient as that of the military tribunal.

Under martial law, the defendants could be forced to answer multiple accusations in a single count, and they enjoyed only limited privacy in consulting their attorneys. Moreover, in a military tribunal, the judge advocate shared the

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duties of both prosecutor and judge. Finally, the only appeal from the judgment of the military court was to the President himself. The most benign interpretation of this travesty of justice is that the government was yielding to the public's demand for swift retribution. In the minds of some observers, there was a more sinister reason for these unusual proceedings. To them, the silencing of the conspirators (who were hooded and manacled during much of their trial), the shooting of Booth, and the mysterious disappearance of several pages of Booth's diary suggested that the plot against Lincoln was orchestrated by Radical Republicans eager to eliminate Lincoln and just as eager to cover their own tracks.

In condemning Mary Surratt, the government was casting its net beyond Booth and his inner circle. Her guilt was largely by association. Her son, John H. Surratt, Jr., was a friend of Booth and a blockade runner for the Confederacy; and both Atzerodt and Payne had stayed briefly at her boarding house in Washington. The two principal witnesses against her, John M. Lloyd and Louis J. Weichmann, knew more than Mrs. Surratt did about Booth's activities; they were fortunate enough, however, to cut a deal with the government for their inconsistent and perjured testimony. In fleeing the country, John Surratt left his mother to be a symbolic victim of public wrath. As both a Southerner and a Roman Catholic, she belonged to two of the nation's most hated minority groups.

Although they pronounced the sentence of death upon Mary Surratt, the members of the tribunal did not believe it would ever be carried out. Along with the sentence, the tribunal also drafted a plea that President Johnson spare her because of her age and sex. We can not be certain that Johnson ever saw that plea; however, we do know that he refused to see Mrs. Surratt's daughter on the day of the execution and flatly denied the intercession of Stephen A. Douglas's widow. (After the execution, Johnson observed that Mary Surratt had kept the nest that hatched the egg.) So certain was the hangman that his victim would be spared that he put only five knots in her noose instead of the customary seven.

By the time that John Surratt was finally apprehended and brought back to the United States for trial in 1867, the sort of military tribunal that had condemned his mother had been declared illegal by the Supreme Court. In the course of his civil trial, his mother's chief accusers gave markedly different testimony than they had two years earlier. Also, the perspective of time made much of the circumstantial evidence against Mrs. Surratt seem less damning than it had in the immediate aftermath of the Lincoln assassination. It is an open question whether it was the nature of the military tribunal or merely the climate of public opinion that had sealed her fate. Nevertheless, her son, who was far more intimately involved with Booth, was freed by a hung jury in a civilian court two years after his mother's death. John Surratt lived the balance of his life in obscurity, dying on April 21, 1916. As the novelist David Robertson has pointed out, he lived long enough to see the depiction of Lincoln's murder in *The Birth of a Nation*.

We need shed no tears over George Atzerodt, David Herold, and Lewis Payne. They probably got what they deserved, even if the means were irregular. However, the fate of Mary Surratt demonstrates the dangers of using a military tribunal against civilian defendants. Once such a practice has been accepted, we cannot be certain that only the obviously guilty will suffer. To justify the suspension of civil liberties as a wartime necessity when no war has been declared puts us on the slippery slope to tyranny. In *1984*, George Orwell showed us how a perpetual state of war makes it easier to control the behavior of a nation's own citizens. That may be one of the reasons why the Constitution gives the power to declare war to the Congress. Time and again over the last 60 years, Congress has abrogated that responsibility by approving protracted military operations without declaring war. That has happened again in the so-called War on Terrorism.

Although those ignorant of history (mostly government spokesmen and cable-news anchors) would have us believe that the nation has never before been threatened by terrorist organizations that do not represent a nation state, the Framers of the Constitution did envision a situation in which the vagueness of the enemy made a precise declaration of war impossible. The concern at that time was piracy on the high seas. (In fact, piracy is one of only three crimes specifically mentioned in the Constitution.) When the early republic was threatened by piracy, we did not invade the native countries of suspected pirates or indiscriminately kill civilians in nations believed to be harboring them. And we certainly did not institute military tribunals that could be used against our own citizens. Rather, the Framers authorized the president to grant letters of marque and reprisal, which would target specific enemies and permit the use of private sources to effect their elimination. Congressman Ron Paul has argued for just such an approach to the piracy represented by Osama bin Laden and his henchmen.

The use of military tribunals in the "War on Terrorism" has gained widespread national acceptance because public opinion was understandably inflamed by the atrocities committed on September 11, 2001. We should, however, remember that the Constitution exists, at least in part, to put a brake on public passions. Neither the legal lynching of Mary Surratt nor the imposition of military justice against the actual accomplices in Lincoln's murder was necessary to preserve the nation. If anything, our existence as a republic was harmed both by this precedent and by the earlier abuses of the Great Emancipator himself. How fitting that the legacy of Lincoln is being cited to justify the current regime's end run around the Constitution.

Mark Royden Winchell is the author of Where No Flag Flies: Donald Davidson and the Southern Resistance *and other books.*

Power, Legitimacy, and the 14th Amendment

by Joseph E. Fallon

The justification for the vast, intrusive, and coercive powers employed by the government of the United States against its citizens—from affirmative action to hate-crimes legislation, from multilingualism to multiculturalism, from Waco to Ruby Ridge—is the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution adopted in 1868, or, more specifically, the authority conferred upon Washington, explicitly or implicitly, by the "privileges and immunities" and "equal protection" clauses of that amendment.

Like the emperor's new clothes, however, the 14th Amendment does not exist. It was never constitutionally ratified, and,

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thus, acts of the government of the United States that are based on the 14th Amendment are actually illegitimate.

Despite its subsequent "interpretation" by the federal judiciary to mandate federal intervention in state and local affairs, the original aim of the 14th Amendment was to ensure the political and economic hegemony of the Northern states over the South. This was why Lincoln and Northern business interests waged total war against the South for four years: to transform the United States from a constitutional republic into a continental empire.

Section Two of the 14th Amendment permitted the disenfranchisement of Southern white men "for participation in the rebellion." Since the word "participation" could mean anything from serving in the Confederate Army, to using the Confederate postal service, to paying taxes to the Confederate government, or even failing to rebel against the Confederate authorities, it could be used by the North to deny the right to vote to virtually the entire adult, white-male population of the South.

Section Three sought to expel the South from every level and branch of government by denying Southern white men "who having taken an oath . . . to support the Constitution of the United States . . . engaged in insurrection or rebellion [against the United States] . . . or [had] given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof" (essentially the entire leadership of the South) the right to hold political or appointive offices, either civilian or military, in state or federal governments. Again, the North could define "engaged" and "given aid or comfort" to bar anyone and everyone.

Section Four protected Northern politicians, military leaders, and businessmen who perpetrated financial fraud in the course of the war from future prosecution and ensured that the North would never have to pay reparations for the theft and destruction it committed against the South.

The 14th Amendment made a mockery of the U.S. Constitution. Sections Two and Three blatantly violated the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment by denying nine million Southerners their political and civil rights on what President Andrew Johnson declared was "an accusation so vague as to be scarcely intelligible and found to be true upon no credible evidence." In addition, Section Three was an *ex post facto* law specifically prohibited by Article I, Section 9 of the U.S. Constitution. And Section Four violated both the Due Process and the Just Compensation Clauses of the Fifth Amendment.

Not surprisingly, when the 14th Amendment was introduced in Congress on June 13, 1866, as House Joint Resolution 127, it was opposed by members from the Southern states. Since Article V of the U.S. Constitution stipulated that an amendment proposed by Congress had to be approved by two-thirds majorities in both Houses, Southern votes ensured the proposed amendment would be defeated.

To prevent that, the Radical Republicans who controlled Congress unilaterally changed the composition of Congress in order to procure the needed majorities. In violation of the Constitution's Article I, Sections 2, 3, and 5, and in particular Article V ("that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate"), they unlawfully excluded the 61 representatives and 22 senators from the Southern states. Moreover, they counted the votes of West Virginia and Nevada—both unconstitutional entities created by Lincoln as part of his war measures.

Even after taking these steps, however, the proposed amendment still faced defeat in the Senate by one vote if the vote of Sen. John P. Stockton of New Jersey, an outspoken critic of the 14th Amendment, was counted. So the Radical Republicans unlawfully expelled him from the Senate as well.

The votes in both the House and Senate approving the proposed 14th Amendment were, therefore, fraudulent. Since President Andrew Johnson opposed the amendment, the initial fraud was compounded by the subsequent refusal of Congress to present the 14th Amendment to the President for his approval as mandated by Article I, Section 7 of the U.S. Constitution.

Once Congress has approved an amendment, Article V stipulates that ratification by three fourths of the states is required for adoption. On June 16, 1866, Congress submitted the unlawfully proposed 14th Amendment to the legislatures of all 36 states, including the Southern states excluded from Congress, for ratification. With the admission of Nebraska into the Union on March 1, 1867, as the 37th state, the number of states needed for ratification was 28.

By March 1, 1867, 12 States had rejected the 14th Amendment. This left only 25 states, three fewer than the U.S. Constitution required for adoption. Later, Maryland and California both voted to reject the amendment, while three states that had ratified it—New Jersey, Ohio, and Oregon—rescinded their respective ratifications, citing voter fraud. While Congress rejected these rescissions, the damage had been done. The 14th Amendment had been constitutionally defeated.

The Radical Republicans reacted by enacting three laws between March 2 and July 19, 1867, known as the Reconstruction Acts. These laws reflected the attitude of Northern "constitutionalists" like Sen. James Doolittle of Wisconsin, who declared that, since "the people of the South have rejected the constitutional amendment," the North should "march upon them and force them to adopt it at the point of the bayonet"; "until they do adopt it," the North should rule the South by military force.

With the Reconstruction Acts, Congress declared "no legal state governments" existed in ten Southern states, even though Congress had officially recognized these state governments as legitimate since 1865. The adoption of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery depended upon ratification by seven of these states—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia—for the required three-fourths majority. Branding them "rebel" states, Congress proceeded to abolish their governments. The South was divided into five military districts and, in blatant violation of both Article I, Section 9, of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Ex parte Milligan* three months earlier, was placed under martial law. This action, motivated by malice for the South and contempt for the U.S. Constitution, has bequeathed to the United States an interesting and ironic legacy.

If the South had "no legal state governments" after 1861 (as Congress maintained in 1867 following the defeat of the 14th Amendment), then the 13th Amendment was never constitutionally ratified in 1865. Slavery, therefore, is still a lawful institution in the United States. On the other hand, if the South had legal governments (as Congress affirmed in 1865 when the South ratified the 13th Amendment), then the 14th Amendment was constitutionally defeated in 1867. Therefore, all subsequent legisla-

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tive and executive acts and judicial decisions based upon the 14th Amendment are null and void.

Without the 14th Amendment, the federal government is deprived of a principal source of its power. Most, if not all, of the laws, regulations, and rulings pertaining to affirmative action, desegregation, "hate crimes," multilingualism, multiculturalism, U.S. citizenship, voting, reapportionment, religion, education, housing, welfare, states' rights, and territorial powers are based almost exclusively on the 14th Amendment. Even the immigration policy pursued since 1965 is justified, to a significant extent, by the 14th Amendment.

Through violence, intimidation, coercion, and fraud, through martial law, through congressional threats to confiscate and redistribute all the property of Southern whites, through removal of Southern governors and judges, and through congressional repeal of state laws requiring a majority of registered voters for the adoption of a new state constitution, Congress successfully created "provisional governments." By 1868, these provisional governments had duly ratified the 14th Amendment (Congress having made ratification a requirement for readmission into the Union). However, under Article V of the U.S. Constitution, only states in the Union can ratify an amendment. Since Congress declared that these provisional governments were not states in the Union and, thus, had denied them representation in Congress, the provisional governments could not ratify this amendment. Therefore, the 14th Amendment remains unratified.

Led by the states of Mississippi and Georgia, Southern whites attempted to have the constitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts—and, by implication, the ratification of the 14th Amendment—reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court agreed and, in 1868, heard legal arguments in *Ex parte McCardle*. When the justices indicated that they were favorably disposed toward the South's constitutional argument, the Radical Republicans in Congress enacted legislation removing this subject from the Court's jurisdiction. This was the only *constitutional* act undertaken by the Radical Republicans in their relentless attempt to impose the 14th Amendment. According to Article III, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution, the appellate jurisdiction of the U.S. Supreme Court is limited by "such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make."

After 1868, the federal government has not permitted any serious legal challenge to the constitutionality of the 14th Amendment. To do so would risk dismantling the entire apparatus of the federal government in a single stroke, depriving federal officeholders—Democrats and Republicans, judges, politicians, and bureaucrats—of the powers and perks they enjoy and expect.

The government of the United States, as established by the U.S. Constitution in 1789, was effectively abolished by the 14th Amendment. In its place was substituted a regime that resembles the absolutist centralized state envisioned by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*. It is the type of political system Patrick Henry and other Founding Fathers had warned against—a consolidated government ruled by demagogues for the benefit of special interests.

It was natural for the post-14th Amendment government of the United States to expand from a continental empire, in which the states of the Union had been effectively reduced to mere administrative units of the federal government, to one whose reach would be, in the words of neoconservative ideologues William Kristol and Robert Kagan, nothing less than "benevolent global hegemony." And it was a relatively simple matter, then, for the government of the United States to go from inflicting death and destruction at Waco to inflecting death and destruction on Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan. Washington emulates Imperial Rome, of whom it was said, "They create a desert and call it peace."

Thanks to folly, hubris, and the 14th Amendment, the government of the United States is faithfully following in the footsteps of ancient Rome—from republic to empire to oblivion.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

MOVING?

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All Play and No Work

by Marian Kester Coombs

A kid today, if he aspires to anything other than slack itself, aspires to one of three "crafts": acting, sports, or rock 'n' roll. He wants either to play a part, to play a game, or to play guitar. He wants to be a player. The work ethic has been replaced by the shirk-and-perks ethic: "I'd rather be [insert *doing anything but my job* here]." Girls just wanna have fun, the kids are alright, life's a beach, and thank God it's Friday in America!

Actress Helena Bonham Carter recalls in an interview,

> I kept thinking I was somebody out of a film. All my career choices were based on films, like *Born Free*—I was going to be a gamekeeper. There was *Charlie's Angels*, I was going to be a secret agent. Then *My Brilliant Career*, and I was going to be a writer. Then I sort of figured, "Well, no, it's probably the acting which is what I want to do."

Actors are still at pains to stress, at least to interviewers, how hard they "work" and how seriously they take their "work." They recount how they have trained for months to learn to ride cutting horses or studied for weeks to be able to deliver lines of dialogue in a foreign tongue. So it sounds unusual to hear actress Yancy Butler's admission: "People keep asking me where I learned the martial arts with my vicious kicks [for her new TV show]. The truth is that I fake it. I don't have a clue about that stuff."

Films are made about the making of films, and soon there may be films made about the making of films about the making of films. Why not? In the film about the making of *Apocalypse Now* (*Hearts of Darkness*), we see Francis Ford Coppola fighting the Philippine government over the disposition of its helicopters: He needs them for the napalm scene, and the government needs them to fight a guerrilla insurgency in the south. Coppola indignantly decries the "ludicrous-

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ness" of the Filipinos' demands.

Fewer and fewer people want to do anything at all, much less anything difficult. This should make us very nervous. Census data reveal the creation of a dangerously unstable and unsustainable "two-tier" society. In California, median family income is 12 percent higher than in the country as a whole, but the state has much higher levels of poverty than the national average. California's middle class is the second smallest in the United States. The Western Center on Law and Poverty points out, "We have very wealthy communities on one hand and then people living in poverty on the other." Mexican immigration to California is (officially) 300,000 people a year. "While [immigrants] fill an insatiable demand for low-skilled labor in California, they also create enormous burdens for education, health care and social service systems," according to the *Sacramento Bee*.

As the Slack Society evolves, we will need to import several million lowly laborers each year just to keep the streets swept and the crops picked. Either our current First World population will be replaced by a distinctly Third World one over a fairly short amount of time, or a moratorium on immigration will allow existing immigrants to "take up slack" themselves through entitlement politics. It requires only one generation (less than 20 years) for immigrants to shed their work ethic in modern America. (Ask the foreign-born parents of Americanized Asian teens.) Even the middle-class Cubans who fled Castro now have hordes of children in the handout crowd; the Cuban-Americans' current turn away from the GOP is a clear indication. In other words, all those people who now so nobly do "work Americans won't do," as George W. Bush put it, will not be doing it for long. What do we do with them then?

Of course, the average American wants his kids to go to college and not have to perform manual labor; it's called upward mobility, realizing the American Dream. As a truck-driving cousin of mine observes, though, "Everybody can't be sitting at a desk. You still need people who do and make and fix things." (But please, Lord, not my kids!)

Gradually, the horror of manual labor seems to have become a horror of labor in general. The great divide between red and blue on that famous electoral map of America is essentially between those who do, and know how to do, things and those who don't, can't, or won't. The blue regions regard the red with much the same mix of dread and dependency as the Eloi felt toward the Morlocks in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. Election 2000 proved that there are already more blue parasites in this country than red providers—many of the blues were too lazy even to get off their duffs and vote, despite legions of Democratic enablers.

Speaking of Democrats, Bill Clinton was and is (in the fullest meaning of the word "is") a world-class slacker, which is another way of acknowledging his prowess as an actor (read: liar). Bill had this knack for impersonating a "quick study," which distracted attention from his fecklessness. When he used to bite his lip and drawl, "Ah've worked harder on this bill than Ah've ever worked in mah lahf," you could just tell that work is something he has avoided like the plague all his days. Bill and Hillary, like the rest of the lawyer caste, don't—and can't—do anything. Look at their record in Arkansas, where, without hardly trying, they actually managed to leave things worse than they had found them, especially in those areas—such as education—where they "worked" the hardest.

Not only do lawyers rack up golden billable hours for doing nothing, their overall effect on the economy is to extract something for nothing on a grand scale and to encourage mass fantasies of a windfall at others' expense. As lawyers are undeniably smart, perhaps we must add to the famous "seven kinds of intelligence" an eighth: the legalistic, defined as "a flair for splitting hairs and rationalizing mutually exclusive propositions, an obsession with the letter as opposed to the spirit of a thing, a keen eye for loopholes, a genius for weasel words, and an instinctive aversion to productive labor in any form."

Two important forms of productive labor that carried man to the top of the food chain are hunting and fishing. Since these require "weapons" and "violence," they are shunned in the new "Look, Ma, no hands" America.

On the distaff side, to use an archaic term from the old world of work, the trade of housewife and mother is now considered the lowest of the low, the ultimate hands-on horror. "Supermom" Madonna revealed to Britain's *Sunday Mirror*, "I don't have any problems with nappies because I have never changed one."

Childlessness is now a full-fledged social movement with slogans and bumper stickers and T-shirts and all, and one of its biggest boasts is that having no children means never having to descend into the nightmare region of diapers, colic, vomit, chickenpox, smelly socks in the hamper, sticky fingerprints on the wall, and peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. Now we have choice, and we choose to stay clean. The mania for long, long fingernails, which render the hands purely ornamental and useless, is another symptom of the growing popular aversion to handiwork. The less prestigious your occupation, the longer the nails. Hear them clickety-clacking disdainfully on the keys of the computer or cash register as if to say, "I'm only stuck here between breaks, girl."

Man has rightly been called *Homo faber*—Man the maker. We make wonderful things that work and are useful and beautiful, and the more advanced our culture, the more wonderful the things we make (which is why the term "Afghan engineering" lacks the same cachet as "German engineering"). People still instinctively know this and are uneasy about the increasingly hands-off economy. The Oshkosh clothing company stopped making genuine farmers' overalls some years ago because of a lack of demand, but it still makes them (though not in America) for toddlers, teenagers, and suburban matrons. Denim, the fabric *par excellence* of men at work, is now the international uniform of the New World Order, an unsubtle homage to the noble proletariat; denim is safer even than black as a fashion statement. This is not new—Marie-Antoinette had a little model farm at Versailles where she and her ladies could play dairymaid—but it is now far more widespread, mass democratized.

In the Theme World future, after all the relentlessly programmed globalist intermarriage has taken place, the only remnants of diversity that will survive will be the displays in "ethnic theme parks" located on territory once occupied by formerly distinct (and now extinct) peoples. People will roam the globe, hungry to pay real laborers to be allowed to watch. There are now almost as many interactive exhibits on the Amish way of life in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as there are actual farms run by Plain People. Groundbreaking has already begun in the backward Balkans. As broadcast by the media and school system, multiculturalism—actually, *anti*culturalism, since

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genuine cultures are always idiosyncratic, esoteric, xenophobic, labyrinthine, and untranslatable—amounts to: In Italy, they stomp grapes! In Japan, they wade in rice paddies! In Africa, they herd cattle with long staves! In Ireland, they knit sweaters and gather seaweed!

And in America, they eat pizza and watch TV. A couple of decades of the slacker ethic have spawned the headphone generation, nourished on the empty, predigested calories of the spectacle, stale repackagings, regurgitations, endlessly recycled retreads, reruns, remakes, replays, revivals, covers, send-ups, put-ons, takeoffs, rip-offs, knockoffs, parodies of parodies, pastiches, simulations, spoofs, satires, "irony," docudrama, voyeurism, and virtual realities. The poverty of these poor children's "so-o-o bo-o-ored" minds is mindboggling. Here's the latest teen tennis phenom, Andy Roddick, as described by a pal: "Andy's a goofball. Big time. He loves *South Park*. He's always imitating cartoon characters. He knows every line from *American Pie*. Off the court he's one of the funniest guys I know." At least he's good at playing tennis.

A diet of 100-percent-recycled culture makes Jack a very dull writer, as well. The power of most great novels lies in their stirring depiction of man at his life's work. The big hole in the heart of modern fiction is that the characters do nothing from dawn to dusk and back again. Living a life as a passive mass-cultural spectator leads to paler and paler imitations of an imitation. Check out contemporary punk bands trying to be the Sex Pistols. Listen to the angry nonsense parroted by youths at the second attempted Woodstock repetition (which ended, not surprisingly, in a spasm of nihilistic violence).

The average person is not to blame for the New Worthlessness. Work has been radically de-incentivized. People have gone slack because they have too little freedom and too little control over their lives. They have been made to see that they have only the most negligible impact on the human enterprise—six billion little people without a stake in the game. The little man has been reduced to playing the lottery in hopes of registering, if only for an instant, as a player in his own life story.

The masses today are worse than proletarianized: They are palestinianized, far more alienated than the worker alienated merely from the product of his own labor. They have almost no identity left at all. They are neither children of (the abolished) God, nor citizens of a nation, nor authority figures, however petty. Plied with endless goods and services, yet denied the only wealth that nourishes the soul—a good name—many, especially among the young, are enraged like spoiled but neglected children, as the riots in Seattle and Genoa and at Woodstock III demonstrate.

At the root, then, of all these degenerations—the play ethic, work aversion, litigiousness, psychic vegetarianism, militant childlessness, Theme World tourism, passive spectation, nihilism—we find government, the tax-fatted calf, working overtime and lying awake at night to plot ways to wreck the private economy: medicine, farming, trucking, the firearms industry, insurance, you name it. Government attacks the real economy not because it is eager to take over and perform all those jobs better or cheaper than the private sector. No, actually *doing* the jobs is the last thing on the minds of the G-men. Government is the employer of last resort. Those who can, do. Those who can't, work for the state. *Control* is what these meddling idlers are instinctively after. With control, they get to tell *you* what to do.

What happens when the real economy is finally destroyed? The average bureaucrat has not thought that far ahead, but the foreordained denouement is clear from previous adventures in socialism on this planet: Government, with its usual compassion and competence, will then be forced—forced!—to reconstitute some sort of economy with compulsory labor and central planning. The more globalized the wrecking process, the more desperately people feel control being sucked away from them.

The September terrorist attack taught us two lessons about work in America: First, in such supreme moments, those who emerge as heroes are those who can *do* things: the firefighters, the policemen, the rescue workers, the medical technicians. Just as startling as hearing the name of the Lord suddenly burst forth from the lips of hardened reporters was hearing those white-collar sophisticates rhapsodize over the know-how of the welders and steelworkers who were indeed, in the aftermath of the destruction, "just doing their jobs."

Second, failing to do your job can have disastrous results. From the top to the bottom of the economic hierarchy, from the superterrestrial heights of national security to the humble checkpoints of airport security, people failed to do their jobs. Here is one woman's description of her training as a Dulles Airport security worker:

> Argenbright employees falsified diplomas and test scores, and hired at least 14 airport security workers with criminal convictions. . . . [T]he company provided little or no training and no semblance of background checks. The woman, who did not want to be identified, said she was able to work for Argenbright although she had been convicted of felony drug charges. She said many of the security personnel hired by Argenbright were not trained and some spoke only limited English. "It was mainly foreigners," said the former employee. "They couldn't carry on a conversation with you. Some of them couldn't say much more than hello or good day."

We have paid our experts billions over the decades precisely to think the unthinkable and plan for the unimaginable. We may have been in denial, but *they* were paid not to be. The sudden, massive short-selling of airline and insurance stock right before September 11 was apparently not noticed, nor were the comings and goings and suspicious contacts and training among known associates of Muslim terrorist groups. We can have all the "procedures in place" (as Janet Reno loved to say) and all the monitors and guidelines and high-tech systems in the world, but if no one is paying attention and interpreting the data competently, all of these will come to naught.

We must hope, given the war in which our nation now finds itself, that we will relearn these lessons: that a job well done is of central importance to human society; that labor ennobles, while idleness degrades; and that a people is only as strong as the good work it does. The days of the "service" and "information" economy that neither served nor informed are over.

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Maryland.

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by George McCartney

Moral Impressionism

In *Vanilla Sky*, director Cameron Crowe and producer/actor Tom Cruise have created an American version of Spanish director Alejandro Amenabar's 1997 feature, *Abre los Ojos* (*Open Your Eyes*). I have not seen the original, but I am told that Crowe has followed it quite closely, even asking Penélope Cruz to reprise her role—a decision at once dramatically apt and pleasingly decorative.

Crowe begins his film with a bravura set piece. We watch David Aames (Tom Cruise), billionaire Manhattan man-boy, awake to the words, "Open your eyes." He rises and grooms himself in front of his bathroom mirror, studiously hunting down a single gray hair in his tousled locks and plucking it from his scalp. Having rid himself of time's offense, he slips into his Mustang and smugly drives down Broadway into Times Square, only to find the world's gaudiest, busiest crossroads inexplicably vacant. He grows disturbed, then panics. Leaving his car in the middle of the avenue, he runs through the ghostly thoroughfare while animated images of barely clad women beckon to him from neon billboards. It is an unnerving scene of consumerism's dead end: a world of advertised pleasures for him alone. Then he awakens with a start to find that he is still in bed dreaming. Rising, he once again drives to his office, this time in the "real" world, comfortingly populated with anonymous masses.

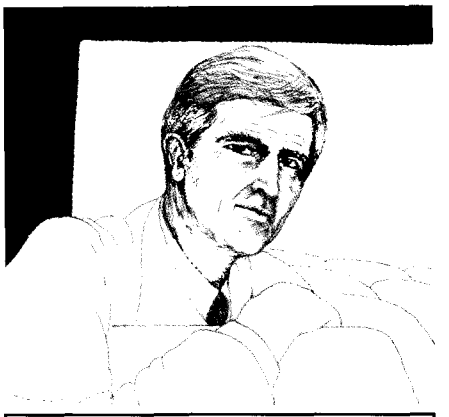
With this over-the-top opening, Crowe announces his intentions. This will be a deep-dish film filled with surrealistic flourishes designed to warn us—in case we had not heard—of the perilous state of modern man. Crowe proceeds to deliver a splashy, intoxicating, zigzag narrative that rarely slows below warp speed. His film is not nearly as profound as he seems to think, and his inspiration may be a bit too *Twilight Zone* for the sophisticates in the audience, but it royally entertains us.

Following Amenabar's film, Crowe employs a narrative strategy dear to the Spanish heart ever since Miguel De Cervantes sent Don Quixote to tilt against the world. He has thoroughly blurred the line between dream and reality. As David comes into focus, we find that he is living the American dream. At 33 years old, he runs a publishing empire; owns a zillion-dollar, umpteen-room Manhattan apartment; beds babes by the bevy; and compels grudging respect—not to mention simmering envy—from all who know him. When he and his friend Brian (played by Jason Lee), an aspiring novelist, narrowly avoid a collision with a Mack truck, his sidekick ruefully remarks, "Death was right there, and *your* life flashed before me!" Hearing this, David just smiles indulgently as if to ask, "Are you surprised?"

In short, we meet Aames in the middle of his Caesar exam. Aldous Huxley believed that the best way to uncover a person's true character is to give him the wealth and power enjoyed by the rulers of imperial Rome. Freed from the restraints that 99.9 percent of humanity must endure, the Caesars were hard-pressed not to unleash their inner monsters. While Aames' resources may not be imperial, he has more than enough to let loose his own particular monster. Surprisingly enough, as ogres go, his is not entirely that repulsive—just vain, willful, and heedless of consequence. David even has enough vestigial conscience to want to do some good with his power. Along with the meretricious glamour magazines he publishes, he wants to promote genuine literature. That is why he keeps the soulful Brian around. He also wants to please the many women in his life—at least on a momentary basis. He's just not terribly concerned about their long-term interests.

(If you have not seen the film yet, you might want to stop reading here. While I have not revealed any of the film's larger surprises in what follows, I have unavoidably sprung the locks of some of the smaller ones.)

David's current mistress, Julie (Cameron Diaz), adores him, but he considers her a friend, or, as he so eloquently puts it, "a f--k buddy." This is why, at his birthday party, he feels perfectly free to flirt with a new charmer named Sofia (the winsomely seductive Cruz) in front of Julie.



Vanilla Sky

Produced by Cruise-Wagner Productions
Directed by Cameron Crowe
Screenplay by Cameron Crowe, based on Abre Los Ojos
Released by Dreamworks and Paramount Pictures

The next morning, David leaves Sofia's apartment after a night of playful wooing, which he brought to the precipice of intimacy before strategically stepping back. As he does with everything else, David conducts his amours with cold calculation. He knows—or thinks he knows—that Sofia's surrender will be all the more abandoned for his delay. He has not foreseen what happens next, however. Julie confronts him as he leaves Sofia's. As they ride in her car, she tells him that he's ignored the consequences of his promises. He is flummoxed by the charge. The word "promise" is not in his romantic vocabulary. "Don't you know," Julie demands, "that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not?" No, he had not considered that. To teach him about truth and consequences, Julie drives off a Central Park bridge, killing herself and horribly disfiguring him. When he emerges from a coma three weeks later, David finds himself with a shattered arm, excruciating headaches, and a hideously ruined face. Filled with rage and self-pity, he makes some efforts to start over again and even expects Sofia to continue their nascent romance. Although she is sorry for him, she understandably does not feel any obligation to build a relationship on what was, after all, nothing more than a few hours of flirting. She hurries away at the first opportunity, leaving him doubly devastated.

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From this point, the narrative fractures into a confusing montage of seemingly disconnected scenes, each establishing a parallel storyline. In one, David is in prison talking to a court-appointed psychologist (Kurt Russell). It seems he has committed a murder but may be eligible for lenience on grounds of diminished mental capacity. In another scenario, Sofia changes her mind and takes him into her apartment. In some scenes, doctors succeed in restoring his face; in others, it remains disfigured. And, during intimate moments, Sofia disconcertingly turns into Julie, who laughs at him demonically. Crowe wants to puzzle us for a while before he lets the pieces fall into place in a denouement that relies on a rather tired science-fiction gimmick that I should not reveal.

In broad terms, the hocus pocus is not difficult to decipher. For all his privilege and torment, David turns out to be remarkably like most of us. His youthful life has been a solipsistic dream occasionally disturbed by the stubbornly obdurate reality of others. He assumes that people will see things his way and grows confused when they do not. In romance, his self-centeredness expresses itself in that all-too-familiar tendency to invest his lady friends with the attributes he expects them to have. This is made perfectly clear with Sofia. At their first meeting, he ecstatically chortles, "Somehow I've found the last semi-guileless girl in New York." Of course, there is no "somehow" about it: David sees what he wants to in his new prospect. Although he knows nothing more about her than what he sees, he immediately invests in her charming appearance the beatific qualities that he is seeking in his new romantic buddy. However, there is little doubt that, with time, she would eventually be demoted to just another sexual appliance.

This explains the scenes in which Sofia changes into Julie. Ultimately, both women are the same to David: They are the feminine clay he seeks to mold to his own specifications. For David, each new mistress has eyes that—contrary to Shakespeare's sonnet—are always like the sun, at least until they are dimmed by the clouds of her independent will. When that happens, he simply moves on to the next goddess.

Crowe is reworking one of literature's oldest themes: the tug between the subjective and the objective, the pleasing ideal and the recalcitrant actual. From Homer to Shakespeare to Yeats, the urgency of this struggle persists. This point is made when the film's title turns up in the script. Showing Sofia his possessions, David points to an original Claude Monet canvas on the wall and his skateboard on the floor. With an ironic show of modesty, he points out that, while Monet's "brush painted the vanilla sky, I painted the skateboard." It is as neat a leveling of value distinctions as one could imagine—and that is the point. David lives in a world without objective standards. His is the slick, postmodern scene in which the only criterion of value is what we saw in the film's first image: the individual at the lonely crossroads of infinite time. The good is what pleases; the bad, what displeases—hence, for him, the Monet and the skateboard exist on the same plane. In a phrase, he lives by an ethic of moral impressionism. Monet was committed to capturing the ideal of the evanescent moment, the fleeting shades of beauty located more in the perceiving mind than in the external world. His shimmering, unfocused landscapes and cathedrals register the collaboration of the beholding eye with the objects it looks upon—"all the mighty world of eye and ear, both what they half create and what perceive," as William Wordsworth put it. In other words, the primary value of objective reality is that it provides the clay which the self can shape into its desires. We have been living under the sway of this romantic exaltation of the self since the end of the 18th century. Liberating as it has been, it is a subjective worldview that—unchecked by life's harder facts, untempered by appeals to philosophically established principles—can lead to David Aames' baffled, blithering solipsism.

Along with his manifest talent for cinematic verve, what I admire about Crowe is his willingness to unmask the cultural assumptions that underwrite our crummy self-indulgence. As he did in *Almost Famous*, he is arguing here that we must awaken from our subjective haze and see things as they are. At one point in David's sessions with the prison psychologist, the doctor muses about himself: "I awoke one day and found I was forty and I was happy." He attributes this epiphany to his two daughters. While his observation seems casual, its import certainly is not. Given our willfulness, it takes a while to appreciate the reality of others. It is telling that it took two daughters to awaken the psychologist. Clearly, they are meant to parallel the two current women in David's life. Intimacy with others—romantic, familial, or companionable—inevitably entails obligations and consequences. Other people are the ultimate wake-up call. Crowe is refreshingly explicit on this point. If we fail to answer the call, we remain exiled in a seductive but pointlessly solipsistic dream. Respond, and we take on the challenge of a difficult but ennobling reality.

Vanilla Sky has been met with derision from many reviewers and has suffered at the box office. This is a shame. I suspect it may have more to do with the film's unpalatable thesis than its limitations. This is an ambitious work, and, in its better moments, the film is wildly enjoyable. The performances are all nicely gauged. Cruise does his cock-of-the-walk routine, tempered here with glimmers of self-doubt, perfectly befitting his character. Cruz is lovely and as enigmatic as she should be. As the romantically obsessed Julie, Diaz blends beauty and horror with all the uncanny force of an Edgar Allan Poe *femme fatale*. And Russell's psychologist is the very soul of moral concern—which, come to think of it, may be what is troubling people. Crowe takes his moralizing so seriously that he never lets his characters—or us—off the hook, right down to his unresolved ending. Given what we are, why should he? C

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Love Thy Neighbor

Ben Lummis was not in a mood to write this morning. He wanted to be outdoors, and, because he was an outdoor writer, being outdoors was as legitimate a part of his job as writing about having been outdoors was after he'd been there. His work had two stages, outdoor and indoor, and in the case of the story he was presently involved with, the outdoor stage was completed and the indoor one only beginning. If, instead of writing, he left the house and did what he really wanted to do today, the result would be that, coming home, he would have two stories that needed writing rather than one. Ben sighed, leaned forward over his desk, and placed his elbows in the polished corners of the manual office typewriter he used to compose the first drafts of his stories.

With the swamp cooler shut down and the windows up around the small adobe house, the cross-breeze through the screens came pleasantly cool, carrying the scent of the false orange trees beside the driveway and the odor of the crimson bougainvillea growing along the Spanish-style iron fence. Before the heat of late June and the start of the monsoon season in early July was a good time to be camped on the desert in a sidewall tent, flying his falcons and enjoying the company of his dogs. Ben covered his face with his hands like a man who has just received devastating news and sat absolutely still in his chair, waiting for his first sentence to come.

It was agony of a kind, like boring a tunnel into granite with his forehead. Five or seven minutes later, he took one hand away and, with the index finger, typed three words onto the rolled-in page. Then he picked up a stub pencil lying beside the machine and struck the words through with a single line. At the same moment, a car door slammed, and boisterous voices broke out in Spanish from beyond the front gate. Ben, looking, saw three Mexican men and, behind them, an ancient truck that had once been white but was now almost entirely black with dribbled tar. Ben pounded his knee with his fist and cursed. The roofers the landlord had promised to send from town had arrived, not more than three weeks late and only two after he'd forgotten about their coming.

Two of the men swung the double iron gates open on the flagstone drive, and then the third got up on the truck seat again and backed in between the standing wings. It was a flatbed truck loaded with a furnace and cauldron, several wheelbarrows, and an arrangement of shovels and brooms, everything blackened and slightly misshapened by the heavy tar. As the truck rolled to a stop just short of the *portal*, the *jefe* turned away and started in the direction of the house. Ben met him at the front door, precisely as the bell chimed in the hallway.

The *jefe* was a plump, middle-aged Mexican, of average height and very cheerful looking with his broad face and full brown eyes, black hair combed over his balding brow, and long black mustaches hanging past the corners of his mouth. He had on a dark-blue snapbutton Western shirt under black canvas coveralls, stiff with tar, that struck Ben as uncomfortable dress for a man doing roofwork in southern New Mexico in June at any time past six or seven o'clock in the morning. The *jefe*, though, seemed enthusiastic about getting to work, grinning broadly as he introduced himself in excellent English as the contractor chosen by Century 21 to replace the portion of the roof that had blown away in a dust storm over the winter. Ben thanked the man and offered his assistance, should it be needed. Then he returned to his study and sat down again before the typewriter with his head in his hands. Before the dogs began an uproar from their run behind the house at the appearance of the Mexicans on the roof and the tearing sound of the old shingles coming off in strips and patches commenced, he'd finished writing the lead paragraph of his story and was beginning on the following one.

After two hours, Ben had finished a third of his quota of 3,000 words, the breeze through the open window behind his desk had ceased, and the air inside the house had become oppressively warm. He was on his way from his desk to the hall switch governing the swamp cooler when the doorbell rang again, and he observed through the screen door the bulky shape of the Mexican boss darkly silhouetted against the midmorning glare. Half regretting his offer to help, Ben set the switch to the HIGH position and went on to the door. "Need anything?" he asked.

The man grinned more widely still and shook his head. "We're on lunch break," he explained. "Come have a beer with us!"

Ben didn't answer right away. Though the writing was going well, he worked without enthusiasm. Also, he'd reached a good stopping place from which to take up again in the next working session.

"Thanks," he told the boss. "I'd be happy to."

The two other men sat on the concrete apron against the house wall in the shade of the *portal* with a picnic cooler at their feet, drinking beer. They grinned and saluted Ben with the beers, while the boss reached a dripping cold can from the ice and handed it to him. His name was Adán Beltrán; the others, Pablo and Jesús, did not give their last names. Pablo was a small, bark-brown, wiry man with wild black hair going gray, gray mustaches, and a rough gray beard; Jesús was much younger, well-built and strong looking, with long raven-black hair and a smooth complexion. All three men were from Chihuahua City, though Adán rented a house in Las Cruces from which he operated his roofing business and where he boarded the help he brought up legally from Mexico. Though Adán's English was nearly perfect, Jesús and Pablo had only a few words, communicating mainly by hand signals accompanied by much grinning and winking. Surrounded by pieces of the ruined roof thrown down on the paving, the four men talked of the dog races and of bullfighting, until Adán looked at his watch and locked down the top of the cooler. "We have to go back to work, now," he

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said regretfully, "but we will call you again at break time—yes?"

When, around one o'clock, Ben drove out to the highway for the mail, he continued along the road for a couple of miles to the mini-mart, where he purchased a case of beer. He brought the beer inside the house without the roofers seeing him do it, and when Adán Beltrán rang the bell promptly at 2:30, Ben lugged his own cooler outside and offered them a drink. Pablo stared as if he had seen something unnatural, Jesús squinted in disbelief, and even Adán looked taken aback.

"Go ahead and take one," Ben urged them. "I drank yours this morning, didn't I?"

Seated with their shoulder blades against the cool adobe, they drank the beer as the Organ Mountains turned pink in the light of advancing afternoon, mourning doves arrived to drink from the trickling fountain beneath the peach trees at the corner of the garden, and the heat continued to build steadily, layer after layer of it, until all the oxygen seemed pressed from the air.

"*Amigo*," Adán told Ben, "you must come and visit me in Chihuahua. There is much to do in Chihuahua. I have a beautiful house and a beautiful wife who is also a wonderful cook. You will have all you want to eat and drink; we will go to all the races and to the bullfight! I will give you the keys to the city, and we will go up in the mountains together and drink beer to keep us cool in afternoon. I can show you how to find my house. You have something to write on? I will give you the directions now."

Ben brought from the house a bullfight poster waiting to be framed. Adán Beltrán drew a tarry pencil from the pocket of his coveralls, turned the poster over on his knees, and began to sketch the route on the cardboard backing, jotting down the distance in kilometers between Juárez and El Porvenir; El Porvenir and Villa Ahumada; Villa Ahumada and El Sueco; El Sueco and El Sauz; El Sauz and Chihuahua City; and finally directions to his house on the west side of town, against the mountains. "It is very simple," he concluded, "like driving to Albuquerque. You must come soon, *amigo*! I will even find you p-ssy, if you like."

The roofing job took four days to complete. Every morning at 10:30, Ben joined Adán, Pablo, and Jesús for beer, and again at 2:30. Sometimes, instead of up under the *portal*, they would sit beneath the peach trees in the garden in front of the house or stroll in the shade of the pecan grove behind it, talking to the dogs through the chain-link fence and admiring the falcons in their huts opposite the pigeon coops, each perched with its head beneath its barred wing and one round yellow eye awake and staring blankly, like the ON light glowing from some inactive but potentially lethal machine. Ben promised to take the three men with him the next time he flew the birds over the desert, and Adán offered to make him a present of some pigeons from his own flock when he visited *Casa Beltrán* in Chihuahua City. They already had a tentative date set for around the middle of July, when Adán expected to be at home getting a fresh crew together for the return trip to the States.

The last day of the job, Adán curtailed the lunch hour sharply and worked his men straight through the afternoon break in order to be done by 4:30, when they had a celebration planned. Ben spent the day in his study with the swamp cooler on and the windows closed against the stench of hot tar, rewriting the final draft of his story and studying maps of the locale for his next trip into the field. Around 4:00, he suddenly became aware of a dinning silence after the furnace shut down, followed by the scrape of ladders and the rumble of barrows being lifted onto the bed of the truck. There was just time to change from flip-flops into cowboy boots, brush his hair, and retrieve his wallet from another pair of pants when the bell rang and Adán Beltrán was at the screen door, grinning thirstily. "*Hola, hombre*! We're finished already. Time to head for the *taberna*!"

They took the truck to town, Ben and Pablo riding in the cab with Adán, Jesús behind them on the bed with his long hair blowing in the wind, making faces at them through the rear window. Adán followed U.S. 70 to the junction with I-25, drove crosstown to the Mexican quarter lying north of the cathedral church, and parked in a dirt lot behind a *cantina* with its back door standing open and *salsa* music coming through it. Everyone got out, and Adán told Ben to go on ahead with Jesús and Pablo while he secured the truck and equipment.

Inside the *cantina* the *salsa* music was so loud that it was difficult to have a conversation. Nearly all the patrons were men, and every one was Mexican: *vaquero* types wearing $200 dollar hats and silver *concho* belts; *paisanos* with their mended boots and crumpled straw hats; day laborers in sweat-stained tank tops and sneakers. Everyone looked at Ben as he entered; they kept on looking at him as he stepped up to the bar with Jesús and Pablo. As the barman set three bottles of beer on the wood, Adán joined them and asked him to bring a fourth. The man nodded in a surly way without answering and gave Ben a dirty look before going.

The *salsa* music played on as they drank, but the other patrons around them seemed to have quit talking. Ben felt uncomfortable and Adán seemed wary, standing rigid with his foot on the rail like a dog on point. They ordered another round, and this time the barman brought only three beers, setting them down before Adán, Pablo, and Jesús. When Ben reminded him in Spanish, the man at first ignored him, then drew the lower lid of his right eye down slowly with his finger and went away again.

"Hey," Ben called after him, in English and loud enough to be heard above the *corrido* song playing on CD behind the bar, "my money's as good as anyone else's. I want some service here, and I want it now!"

The *vaquero* on the stool beside him was already lifting his right pant leg above the boot-top as Jesús and Pablo, their own knives drawn, stepped round on both sides of him.

"We need to leave," Adán told Ben in a low, apologetic voice.

No one spoke until they were in the truck again and Adán raised his eyebrows at Ben.

"Let's go back to my house and drink," Ben suggested. "I have plenty of beer. Whiskey and tequila, too."

They were crossing the East Mesa, at the place where Pat Garrett was shot in the back while relieving himself beside the road, when Adán spoke again.

"I am very sorry," he said. "I do not know what to say. It is different always it seems when there's a group."

"I know it," Ben told him. "It's the same with our people, too."

The new roof gleamed like gold in the evening sun as the truck drew up in front of the closed iron gates, scaring a flock of doves from the fountain into the branches of the peach trees.

"*Hombre*," Adán asked, "you're coming to Chihuahua to visit us next month—no?"

"Oh hell yes," Ben agreed with him. "I'm going, Adán. I wouldn't miss it for the world." c

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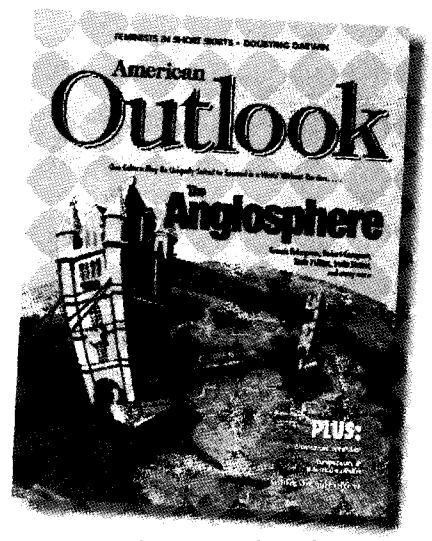

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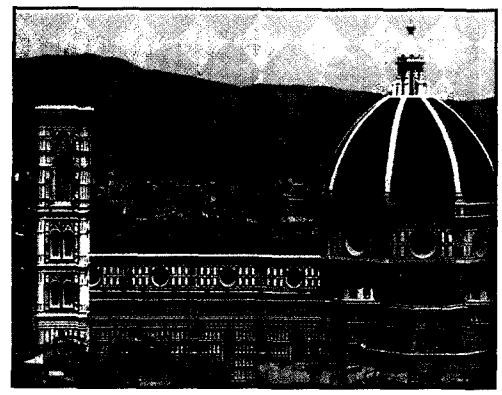

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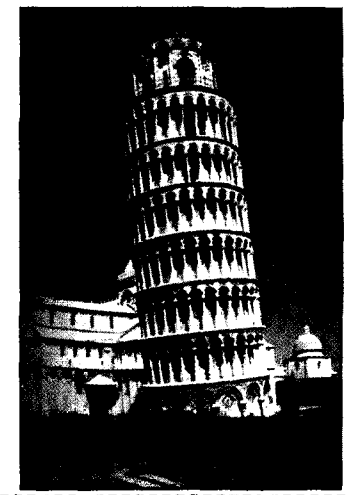

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